THE CAPE PENINSULA

DESCRIBED BY
RÉNÉ JUTA
PAINTED BY
W. WESTHOFEN

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To Addie.

Christmas.

1910.

THE CAPE PENINSULA

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PEN AND COLOUR SKETCHES

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RÉNÉ JUTA

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W. WESTHOFEN

LONDON: ADAM & CHARLES BLACK
CAPE TOWN: J. C. JUTA & CO.
1910

LOAN STACK

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J8

DEDICATION

'ONLY those who see take off their shoes. The rest sit round and pluck blackberries and stain their faces with the natural hue of them.'

* * * * * *

'I am told there are people who do not care for maps, and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the prehistoric footsteps of man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills and the ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the Standing Stone or the Druidic Circle on the heath; here is an inexhaustible fund of interest for any man with eyes to see or twopence worth of imagination to understand with.'

R. L. STEVENSON.

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CHARACTERS

Marinus and The Writer, two slightly sentimental travellers, in modern dress, generally riding-clothes.

Immortals.

Mynheer Van Riebeek, and all the Dutch Commanders.
Captain Cook.
Marion Le Roux.
Mr. and Lady Anne Barnard.
Old Man Van der Pool.
The English Governors.
Some English Midshipmen.
Mynheer Van Rheenen, a brewer.
Mr. Barrow, a naturalist.
Monsieur Le Vaillant, a French explorer with a temperament.
Lieutenant Abraham Schut.
Kolbé, a great liar with a sense of humour.
Mynheer Cloete, a wealthy farmer,

And some others.

Chorus.

Hottentots, Bushmen, Saldanhas, Dutch Soldiers and Sailors, English Soldiers and Sailors, Burghers, Slaves, Market-Gardeners, Wine-Makers, Fishermen, and ordinary people from 1651 to 1910.

THE CAPE PENINSULA

CHAPTER I

THE CASTLE

UNDER three purple-flowered trees standing in the Castle courtyard, one blazing hot morning, we, more sentimentally than travellingly inclined, sat and rested while a khaki-clothed Tommy wandered round to find a guide to show us over the old Dutch fort. We thanked Heaven for his half-heartedness and for some shade. Marinus, fortunately for us both, smoked his pipe of peace and of Transvaal tobacco, and I opened the Brass Bottle, which, indeed, is no bottle at all, but, as everyone not vulgarly inclined knows, a fairy-tale metaphor for one's imagination. The barometer registered 97° F. in the shade, which is a perfect state of atmosphere for the fumes of the Brass Bottle, in which, all mingling with the smoke from Marinus' pipe, the building of the Castle began.

The walls dissolved into blue air: the brasswork of the 'Kat,' the block of buildings dividing the

Castle into two courtyards, melted into one small spot of liquid, leaving a dry, dusty, levelled yellow plain, with an earthwork wall embodying the spirit of the dykes of the Netherlands in its composition —for the green waves of Table Bay lapped at its base. It was the second day of January, 1666; under the blazing sun three hundred discontented-looking men were digging and levelling the hard earth. At the westerly land-points were the foundations of two bastions. Suddenly a group of men appeared, looking like Rembrandt's 'Night-Watch' come to life, carrying sealed parchments and plans, followed by many Madagascar slaves in clean white linen tunics not to be renewed for six whole months, this being the New Year. The slaves carried bags of food and a long tray made of wood, on which were about one hundred small money-bags. One of the Night-Watch, who was the Commander Wagenaar, walked up to a long table whereon was a white stone; the guns of the old fort, crumbling to pieces across the parade-ground, fired. It was noon, and the foundation-stone of the Castle was laid. The three hundred weary, sweating men raised a feeble cheer, the masons, carpenters, and smiths, advancing separately, received from the hands of the 'Fiscal,' Chief Magistrate and Attorney-General of the Colony, the gift of the General Netherlands East India Company of thirty Rds., or rix-dollars, tied up

in the small black bags. Then the Company moved across to another part of the ground, and the Predikant, the Rev. Joan van Arckel, proceeded to lay another stone, followed by the Fiscal, Sieur Hendrick Lucas, to whose honour fell the laying of the third great corner-stone. Then were the entire three hundred malcontents, as well as the soldiers who had also laboured, presented with two oxen, six sheep, one hundred fresh-baked wheaten loaves, and eight casks of Cape-brewed beer, 'which food and drink, well cooked and well prepared,' whispered the Chief Surgeon, Sieur Pieter van Clinckenberg, to Lieutenant Abraham Schut, 'let us hope may induce these sluggish fellows to be better encouraged and made more willing to work.'

Lieutenant Abraham Schut, to whose duties of supervising the Company's stables and the Mounted Guards in the country, and the watch-houses, and the supervising of the workings and workers of the vineyards, the orchards, and the granary, were also added those of 'keeping an eye' on the 'lazy fellows at work in the brick and tile fields,' very solemnly stared before him at the 'encouraged' diggers, and wondered what reward the General Netherlands East India Company had laid up for him.

But the Fiscal was addressing the crowd gathered round the Commander. I had missed some of his

speech because of these two babbling Night-Watchers next me, but I now listened: 'And that it may also somewhat be evident that by this continual digging and delving in and under the ground, poets have also been found and thrown up, a certain amateur this day presents to the Commander the following eight verses.' The crowd drew closer to the Fiscal, who continued with the amateur's verses:

Den Eersten steen van 't Nieuwe Casteel Goede Hoop heeft Wagenaar gelecht met Hoop van Goede Hoop.

Ampliatie.

Soo worden voort en voort de rijcken uijtgespreijt,
Soo worden al de swart en geluwen gespreijt,
Soo doet men uijt den aerd' een steen wall oprechten,
Daer't donderend metael seer weijnigh (an ophecten)
Voor Hottentoosen waren 't altijts eerde wallen.
Nu komt men hier met steen van anderen oock brallen,
Dus maeckt men dan een schrik soowel d'Europiaen,
Als vor den Aes! Ame! en wilden Africaen,
Dus wort beroemt gemaeckt 't geheijligst Christendom,
Die zetels stellen in het woeste heijdendom,
Wij loven 't Groot Bestier, en zeggen met malcander,
Augustus heerschappij, noch winnend' Alexander,
Noch Caesars groot beleijd zijn noijt daermee geswaerd,
Met 't leggen van een steen op 't eijnde van de Aerd!

The First Stone of the New Castle Good Hope has Wagenaar laid with Hope of Good Hope.

Thus more and more the kingdoms are extended;
Thus more and more are black and yellow spread;
Thus from the ground a wall of stone is raised,
On which the thundering brass can no impression make.

ON THE RAMPARTS OF THE OLD CASTLE
(MOONLIGHT)

For Hottentoos the walls were always earthen,
But now we come with stone to boast before all men,
And terrify not only Europeans, but also
Asians, Americans, and savage Africans.
Thus holy Christendom is glorified;
Establishing its seats amidst the savage heathen.
We praise the Great Director, and say with one another:
'Augustus's dominion, nor conquering Alexander,
Nor Cæsar's mighty genius, has ever had the glory
To lay a corner-stone at earth's extremest end!'

Lieutenant Abraham Schut came towards me; no, it was not this wonderful Abraham, though he wore a uniform—the cheering of the crowd still rung in my ears. 'Who wrote it?' I said. 'Wrote what?' The subaltern stared at me. 'Built it, I suppose you mean,' he smiled. 'Oh yes, built, of course, of course,' I muttered, hotter than ever. Marinus' pipe had burnt out, and the officer who stood before us wore khaki.

With the last words of the quaint Dutch poem ringing in my ears, we followed our guide across the courtyard into an arched white doorway. The old entrance, the sea entrance to the Castle, was blocked up, because on the other side runs the Cape Government Railway, with all its paraphernalia of tin walls, engine-rooms, dirty, ugly workshops, gasometers, coal-heaps, all making up the foreshore scenery of Table Bay, and delighting the eyes of the workers and drones who are daily hurried (*sic*) along like 'animated packages in a rabbit hutch.'[1]

[1] The Right Hon. J. X. Merriman.

In the plaster ceiling of this archway is such a charming miniature plan, in raised stucco, of the Castle buildings. From here we climbed some stone steps and came on to the ramparts, called after the ships that first brought Company rule to the Cape—the *Reiger*, the *Walvis*, the *Dromedaris*. We climbed up stone stairs, and in white stucco, in the wall, were the Company's arms—the big galleon in full sail. We passed the cells—the one used by Cetewayo, the rebellious Chief of the Zulus, the 'Children of Heaven,' had a special little fireplace sunk into the wall—walked along wonderfully neat, bricked ramparts past the Guard Tower, and climbed down more steps into the courtyard.

We rambled through the quarters of the old Governors. Everything is groaning under heavy military paint—teak doors, beautiful brass fittings and beamed ceilings—and about a mile away, shut up in a small ugly museum room, are the Rightful Inhabitants — the proper belongings of these long rooms: the oak tables, the big chairs, which once held the old Dutch Governors, the glass they used, the huge silver spittoons, their swords, the flowered panniers of their wives' dresses, fire-irons, brasses, china, the old flags, someone's sedan-chair—all bundled together in grotesque array. The teak-beamed rooms in the Castle would make a better setting than the little room in the museum.

'Marinus,' I said, 'isn't it awful—this horrible clean paint and these little tin sheds in the old garden? Oh, Marinus, *do* let us scrape this tiny bit of latch, just to peep at the lovely brass beneath! And let us pretend we are putting back the old cupboards, and coffers, and china, and let us burn all that'—with my eye on sheets of neat military maps and deal tables. But Marinus, with the fear of God and of the King, pushed me rudely past a Georgian fireplace into a large room with a big open chimney. Over the grate, let into the wood, I saw the most ridiculous old painting—like a piece of ancient sampler in paint instead of silk—an absurd tree with an impossible bird on a bough, and beneath it a terraced wall with some animals like peacocks, with the *paysage* background *à la* Noah's ark, but slightly less accurate. 'There is a superstitious story about that picture,' said Marinus. 'They say some treasure was hidden in the thick wooden screen over the chimney, and the picture was gummed over it. The story goes that whoever should touch this picture, or attempt to remove it, would die shortly afterwards. It may be that the curse, or a bit of it, landed on the old, stamped brass screen which was taken to Groote Schuur, shortly before Rhodes died. But no one would want this horror, would they?' This story made me love the chintz picture, and, after all, the colours were good;

it was antique; it was old; and there was treasure behind it!

Above this room are Anne Barnard's apartments, where she came to live when the Secretary of State, Melville, gave 'the prettiest appointment in the world for any young fellow'—the Secretaryship to the Governor of the Cape—to Lady Anne's husband in 1797. She had to write Melville several letters before she got this appointment. 'To pay me all you have owed and still owe me, you *never can*—but what you can you should do, and you have got before you the pleasure of obliging me,' she wrote. There is stuff for a novel in this sentence. The last appeal, 'You owe me some happiness, in truth you do,' brought this pretty appointment with a salary of £3,500 a year.

I looked out of a window of her room, which opened on to a small balcony, and conjured up the procession she saw the day after she landed—the taking of the oath of allegiance to King George III., the crowd trooping in through the yellow-bricked gateway, clattering over the cobble-stones, every man with his hat off (an old Dutch regulation on entering the Castle on a public occasion). 'Well-fed, rosy-cheeked men, well-powdered and dressed in black! "Boers" from the country, farmers and settlers, in blue cloth jackets and trousers and very large flat hats, with a Hottentot slave slinking behind, each carrying his master's umbrella, a red

handkerchief round his head, and a piece of leather round his waist comprising his toilette.'

I heard voices under the arch-gateway leading to the inner courtyard; the subaltern had another party in tow, and his nice voice was very clear: 'Oh yes, wonderful people, these old Dutch Johnnies; everything they built lasts so well. Now look at this old sundial; same old thing! there it is, *keeping the right time still—what?*'

I laughed quite loudly, and the party looked up, but I had flown back into Anne's room, which is haunted, so perhaps they thought it was the ghost —same old ghost! a good lusty ghost—what?

I met Marinus in the inner court with a man carrying a lantern and some huge keys—our guide to the magazine and armoury, which might have been the crypt of some old European monastery, with what seemed to be miles of white arches, arches with broad brass shutters over the windows, covered with red or grey army paint.

The garden of this second courtyard exists no longer, though the man with the lantern and the keys told us he remembered it—a pond with bamboos and trees. Beyond the moat on the mountain side, on a low level, is a disused Tennis court, a real court for the 'Jeu de Paume' of the seventeenth century, with hard cement walls and cement floor.

Although Governor Borghorst, with his entire

family, amused themselves by carrying the earth in baskets from the ditch which was to form the moat, the real work of the Castle was carried out from old plans of Vauban by Isbrand Goski, in a great hurry, with the shadows of French cannon and French flags disturbing his dreams. The shadows proved worthless phantoms, for peace was declared before the fort was ready. Later on, Sir James Craig, filled with zeal for the defence of this ultra-important outpost, which had come, with some slight misunderstanding, into the hands of England, caused more blockhouses to be built along the slopes of the Devil's Peak, realizing the ridiculous position of the Castle for defence purposes. Fort Knokke was connected with the Castle by a long, low, fortified wall, called the 'Sea Lines.' Beyond the Castle stood the 'Rogge Bay,' the 'Amsterdam,' and the 'Chavonnes' batteries, while at the water edge of the old Downs—now called Green Point Common—stood the little 'Mouille' battery. The land on which, unfortunately, the Amsterdam battery was built has become a valuable adjunct of the docks, and it now stands a scarred, maimed thing with its sea-wall lying in débris. A sad spectacle, like a deserted beehive, with all its cells and secrets exposed to the dock world—half solid rock, half small, yellow Dutch brick.

It is Wednesday morning in present Cape Town,

we have left the Castle, wept over the Amsterdam battery, and marched up Adderley Street.

At the top of Adderley Street is the old Slave Lodge, now used for Government Offices and the Supreme Court, low and white, with cobbled court-yard and thick walls. About here, in the old days, began the Government Gardens or 'Company's' Gardens, a long oak avenue running through them. At the time of the Cession of the Cape to the English, the Gardens had been very much neglected. Lord Macartney appropriated a large slice for the rearing of curious and rare plants (the Botanical Gardens).

Government House, on the left, was originally built as a pleasure pavilion or overflow guest-house during the 'Company's' régime. One or two of the later Dutch Governors used it as their residence, and during the short English rule in 1797 Lord Macartney and his successor, Sir George Younge, ceased to use the large suite of rooms in the old Castle. Poor Lord Macartney, because of his gout, found the narrow, steep stairs in the Gardens House a great trial. He hopped up the stairs like a parrot to its perch, says one of his staff in a private letter; but Sir George Younge, fresh from Holyrood, rebuilt the stairs and kitchens and the high wall round a part of the garden. For the occasion the avenue was shut to the public, which nearly caused a revolution. It has seen much, this

low, yellow 'Pavilion in the Gardens.' It has sheltered French, English, and Dutch: famous for its ancient hospitality, its big white ball-room saw our great-grandmothers, in white muslin and cashmere shawls, dancing under the tallow candles: every tree in the garden hung with lights: Van Rheenen and Mostaert ladies dancing away, while their husbands and fathers and mothers stood outside and cursed their partners: but one must dance, no matter what one's politics may be.

Hanging on the walls of the present-day Government House are portraits of the Past-Governors—Milner with the thinking eyes, dignified Lord Loch, Rosmead, Grey, Bartle Frere benignly gazing. Skip some history, and you have Somerset, stern and disliked; 'Davie' Baird, full of good round oaths, in 'Raeburn' red; Sir Harry Smith of the perfect profile, too short for the greatness of his spirit. Marinus grows sentimental before this portrait, because of Juanita, Lady Smith, her beauty, and her bravery. 'But she was fat'—this from me. Marinus looks compassionately on such doubtful tactics. 'She was not fat when he found her in that sacked Spanish town; she was not fat when he sent her that long ride to return the looted silver candlesticks; she was not fat when she rode with him into danger during the Kaffir wars—wonderful energetic woman!' 'Sir Harry was very short,' continued Marinus, whose methods are

quite unoriginal. 'But his dignity, and his beautiful nose!' I said; 'it reminds me of that story told of Napoleon, who tried and failed, through being too short, to reach a certain book from a shelf. A tall Marshal came to his aid, and, looking down at the little Emperor, said: "Ah, sire, je suis plus grand que vous." "Pas du tout, vous êtes plus long," said the Emperor.'

Then there is the portrait of Macartney, looking straight across the room at old Dutch Rhenius in wig and satins, whose shrewd, amused eyes follow one about the room. I think Rhenius' dinner-parties were probably amusing.

There are no other portraits of Dutch Governors; none of those who followed in such quick succession just before the first British occupation.

One of these, De Chavonnes, ruled with pomp and circumstance. There is an amusing story set down in the 1720 *Journal* wherein the Governor maintained his dignity in the face of a humorous situation.

De Chavonnes was at the Castle, and into Table Bay sailed the English ship, the *Marlborough*. She failed to salute the Castle on arrival. Much bustle and fuss—such an insult cannot be passed over. The Wharf-master, Cornelius Volk, is ordered to proceed on board and inform the captain that no one will be allowed to land before the usual salute is fired. With more haste arrives

an English midshipman, very pink and well-mannered: 'We have on board an elephant, your Excellency, and are afraid the firing might frighten him.' His Excellency and the Wharf-master and the chief merchant, Jan de la Fontaine, together with the members of the Council and officers of the garrison, stared at the pink-faced middy. De Chavonnes hesitated only one minute, which is a long period of time for the middy, who I am quite sure had compromising dimples; then came His Excellency's answer: 'The excuse is allowed.'

A very dignified finale! Smaller things than elephants have unbalanced the scales of peace.

CHAPTER II

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SOCIETY AND SLAVERY

We walked across the parade-ground, and past the spot where, in my dream, I had seen the old Van Riebeek fort crumbling to pieces, with its canal and little bridges: now, there is a building called the Post Office, and instead of the canal, with its tree-bordered pathways, a street called Adderley Street, with shop-windows where the trees stood. Even the old Exchange is gone, with its stiff row of trees and its chained posts and *kiosque*, before which, in the turbulent days of Sir Harry Smith's régime, all Cape Town, English, Dutch, Malay, in stock, and crinoline, and turban, with one united voice roared against the Imperial Government's decree, which was to turn the Peninsula into a dumping-ground for convicts. Crinoline, stock, and turban kept the half-starved convict ships with their unwelcome freight for five months at anchor in Simon's Bay. Sir Harry, with an eye of sympathy on the mob, and the other eye of duty on the starving convict ships, ordered food to be sent, offered famine prices: no one moved. A few

judicious civil servants, with both eyes on the main chance, smuggled a small supply on board. But the crowd in front of the old Exchange won the day, and Australia profited instead.

At the end of the eighteenth century a young lady described the Cape and its inhabitants in a few words: 'Di menschen zyn moei dik en vet, di huizen moei wit en groen' (The people are very fat and plump; the houses are pretty white and green).

Up Strand Street, which was the 'Beach Street,' lived all the high in the land, the Koopmans, or merchants—'a title,' says an old writer, 'that conferred rank at the Cape to which the military even aspired.' There they lived, in flat-roofed, high-stoeped houses with teak doors and small-paned glass windows, facing the sea; the men smoking, drinking and selling; the women eating, dressing and dancing. Not a decent school in the town, not a sign of a library, only a theatre whose productions bored them intolerably: 'Ach, foei toch, Mijnheer Cook,' says the lady with the smallest feet in all Kaapstad to the famous sailor Cook, who was the guest of her father, Mijnheer Le Roux, 'go to the theatre? to listen for three hours to a conversation?' Cook gave in, and, instead, was carried off in a big 'carosse,'[1] with a Malay coachman in large reed hat over his turban, pointed and with flowing ribbons at the side, to the Avenue in

[1] Barouche.

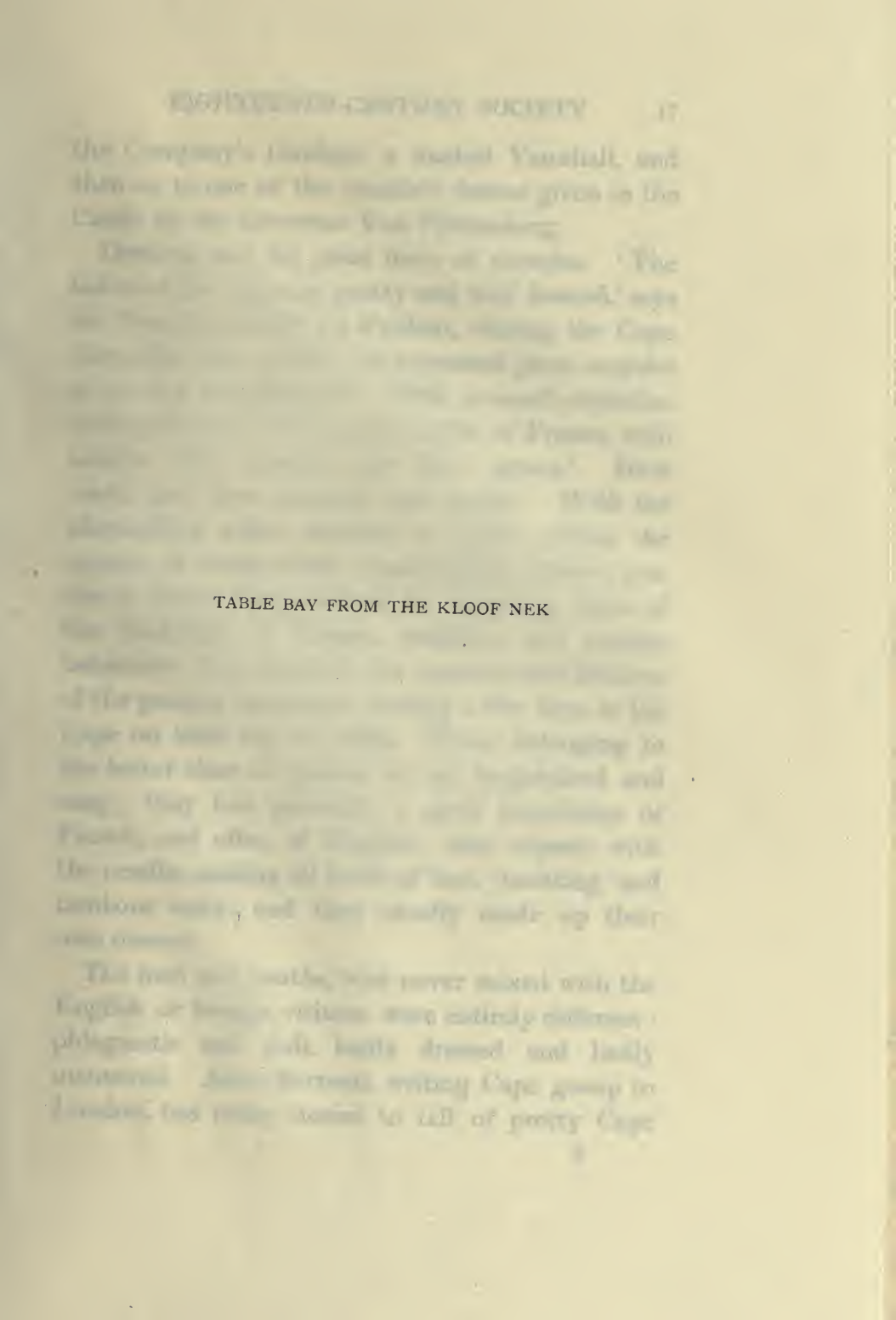

TABLE BAY FROM THE KLOOF NEK

the Company's Gardens, a modest Vauxhall, and then on to one of the monthly dances given in the Castle by the Governor Van Plettenberg.

Dancing was the great form of exercise. 'The ladies of the Cape are pretty and well dressed,' says the French traveller Le Vaillant, visiting the Cape about this time—1772. He expressed great surprise at the way they dressed: 'With as much attention to the minutiæ of dress as the ladies of France, with neither their manners nor their graces.' How could they have manners and graces? With the adaptability which amounts to genius, which the women of newly-arisen cosmopolitan nations possess as Fate's compensation for depriving them of the birthright of history, tradition, and ancient habitation, they imitated the manners and fashions of the passing passengers resting a few days at the Cape on their way to India. Those belonging to the better class all played on the harpsichord and sang; they had generally a good knowledge of French, and often of English; were experts with the needle, making all kinds of lace, 'knotting' and tambour work; and they usually made up their own dresses.

The men and youths, who never mixed with the English or foreign visitors, were entirely different: phlegmatic and dull, badly dressed and badly mannered. Anne Barnard, writing Cape gossip to London, has many stories to tell of pretty Cape

ladies running off with Englishmen or Frenchmen. The thanksgiving sigh of one worthy 'Koopman' is conclusive: 'Grace à Dieu, ma femme est bien laide!'

However, we must return to the house of Le Roux in the Strand Street. It is the day after the fête in the Avenue and the Governor's ball. At an old French bureau, with metal inlays, praising Monsieur Buhl in every beautiful line, this gallant Captain Cook wrote in his *Journal* while the pretty little 'Foei toch,' with sighs of neglect, sat playing the spinet in a corner of vantage. They changed places presently—he would dictate and she should write. Two minutes passed, and Cook got up and looked over her shoulder. She had written, atrociously, a funny little French verse and signed it:

'Marion pleurt,
Marion rit,
Marion veut, qu'on la marie.
'MARION.'

Cook smiled and bowed. 'Me dear, you have the most adorable foot in the world, but I dare say little for your hand.' Very witty of him, but of course she wrote badly; there were no schools, only ill-paid writing masters. The parsons, all well paid by the Government, would not condescend to such a worthless occupation.

So Cook wrote his *Journal* himself, in large,

scrawling writing, with old-fashioned *f*'s, while his two ships, the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*, anchored by stout chains instead of cables in this Bay of Storms, lay waiting for a good wind to sail away round the world. And Marion sang from her corner at the spinet:

'Marions ci,
Marions ça,
Mais jamais, jamais marions là.'

Cook writes:

'The Cape of Good Hope,
'*Monday, November* 2, 1772.

'The Cape of Good Hope, in Caffraria, or the Country of the Hottentots, is the most southern promontory of Africa.

'It is very mountainous.

'The Table Mountain is of a great height (*sic*), and the top of it is always covered with a cap of clouds before a storm. There are no harbours, though there is a sea-coast of a thousand miles. When Commodore Byron touched at the Cape he was obliged to work into Table Bay with his top sails close reefed. Indeed, the Cape is scarce ever free from storms a week together; the winds blow hard and on every side from the vast southern ocean, and the waves of the sea rise to a height never seen or experienced in any part of Europe. The Bay of Biscay, turbulent as it is, has no billows that mount like those on this extensive ocean; the stoutest vessels are tossed and almost lifted to the skies. A number of rich ships have

perished on this coast; the Dutch have lost whole fleets even at anchor before the Town.

'The climate is very healthy, the country is fine, and it abounds with refreshments of every kind. The Company's garden is the most ravishing spot.'

(He read this to Mademoiselle Marion, who had found Mr. Pickersgill, his Third Lieutenant, a good second when the gallant Captain, with his tongue in his cheek and a wink at Marion, escorted the fat wife of Governor Van Plettenberg round the most ravishing Gardens.) The Captain went on with his diary:

'The garden produces all the most delicious fruits of Asia and Europe. It is guarded from the winds and storms by hedges of bay, very thick and high, affording a most refreshing shade in the hottest season. It abounds with peaches, pomegranates, pineapple, bananas, citrons, lemons, oranges, the pears and apples of Europe, all excellent in their kind, and the crimson apple of Japan, appearing through the green leaves, of all the most beautiful. The Dutch have large plantations of almond-trees, and many sorts of camphor-trees, and there is scarce a cottage without a vineyard to it. Their cabbages and cauliflowers weigh from thirty to forty pounds, their potatoes from six to ten, raised from seed brought from Cyprus and Savoy. Their corn is ripe in December, and our Christmas is the time of their harvest. In January they tread out their corn, and in February the farmers carry it to the Company's magazines.

'They sow every kind of grain but oats. Lions,

tigers, leopards, elephants, and the rhinoceros are to be found here; the elephants are very large; their teeth (*sic*) weigh from sixty to one hundred and twenty pounds. The Dutch keep up a body of regular forces, and have a strong garrison at the Cape; they have also a militia, a corps of men in all nations formidable in themselves, most dreadful to an enemy, and, when called out for service, spreading destruction all around them in the heights of their ungovernable fury. They are of so robust a disposition, and so naturally inclined for war, that, like the Devonshire and Northampton-shire champions in England, they are ever ready to solicit employment, even against the principles of their own institution.'

Next day the Governor, the English Consul, the Fiscal, Marion and her father, together with a large party, boarded the *Resolution*, to see them make fresh water out of salt water; and when they left, and before the *Resolution*, firing fifteen guns, and the *Adventure* nine, sailed away round the world, Mr. Pickersgill and Marion had found time to fall in love. Marion at her spinet that evening shed very salt little Dutch tears when she came to the lines, 'Mais jamais, jamais marions là.'

There is a charming poem by Ian Colvin which Marinus thinks might be inspired by Marion and her Lieutenant.

In the Museum at the top of the old Company's gardens lies a little English shoe of surprising smallness—surprising, for not only Anne Barnard

remarked on the size of the Cape ladies' feet: there is that nice story of the enterprising merchant who chartered a large shipload of out-sizes in ladies' shoes, and the ladies sent their slaves in the dark to buy them!

The poem goes:

> 'There's a tiny English shoe
> Of morocco, cream and blue,
> Made with all a cobbler's skill
> By Sam Miller in Cornhill.
>
> 'Many a story, quaint and sweet,
> Of the lady fair, whose feet
> Twinkled with a charm divine
> Beneath her ample crinoline,
> Making her tortured lovers dream
> That heaven itself was blue and cream.'

The story tells of how this dainty creature walked down the 'Heerengracht,' followed by the tortured lovers:

> 'Van der Merwe, Jacques Theron,
> The Captain of the garrison,
> Petrus de Witt, or Van Breda,
> Or Cloete of Constantia.
> And then the Fiscal—fat and old—
> What matters? he had power and gold,
> Coffers of dollars, and doubloons,
> Gold mohurs, pagodas, ducatoons,
> And in his cupboards stored away
> The priceless treasures of Cathay.'

Then it tells of how she loved this English sailor, how he left to sail to many strange lands, and asked her what she wished to have.

'And she, although her cheeks were wet,
Was in a moment all coquette:
"Your English fashions would, I fear,
But ill become my homely sphere;
Besides, you know not how to choose—
Bring me instead a pair of shoes."'

So the English lover sailed away, and the Fiscal became a menace to the poor little cream and blue 'Jonge Vrouw,' and the wedding-day arrived:

'From Signal Hill to Witteboom,
From Kirstenbosch to Roodebloem,
With cannon, bugle, bell and horn,
They ushered in the wedding morn.'

But the English lover and the shoes arrived just in time; the bride was missing; the wedding-party and the storming Fiscal rushed down to the sea-shore—'a ship in a cloud of sail was riding out of the Bay in a favouring gale.'

'They heard above the ocean's swell
Ring faint and clear a wedding bell;
And where the boat put off, they found
A tiny shoe upon the ground.'

'Marions ci,
Marions ça,
Et jamais, jamais marions là.'

A charming idyll to amuse us as we climbed up the hill to Riebeek Square, where the flat-roofed houses and the old Slave-Market with a few wind-twisted pines have so much of the 'old order' in their keeping.

Behind the square were the old brickfields, where poor Lieutenant Schut's duties lay. The Slave-House stands in the middle of the square.

This energetic young man disappears from the pages of the *Journals* and presumably from society.

'*August* 1, 1668.

'Lieutenant Schut is expelled from the Council, because he has passed a deed of reclamation to the widow of the late Reverend Wachtendorp for libellous words uttered by him behind her back, and to her injury.

'The Council should keep itself free from obloquy, and unpolluted.'

Praiseworthy sentiments, but they must have suffered for them. I find no mention of another paragon who was able to accept the responsibilities imposed upon Schut.

Indiscriminate gossip or libel was most severely punished at the Cape, the desire to be free from obloquy not being confined to the Council.

In 1663 Teuntje Bartholomeus, wife of the burgher, Bartholomeus Born, is banished for six weeks to Dassen Island for having libelled a certain honest woman. A perfect rest-cure! Six weeks on Dassen Island! alone with Nature, wind, sea, rock-rabbits, and seals!

There is no official mention of her return from exile.

Slaves.

'For there is no country in the world where slaves are treated with so much humanity as at the Cape,' writes Le Vaillant in 1780, but in reading through the old day-books of Van Riebeek, Hackius, Borghorst, Isbrand Goski, and the Van der Stels, the punishments inflicted on slaves might have been inspired by those old, over-praised painters, who gloried in an anatomical dissection of a poor wretch whose miserable body possessed no anatomy at all. The Mozambique, Madagascar, and Malay slaves were keel-hauled; they were tied in sacks and thrown into the Bay; they were tortured. Here is the sentence of one: 'Bound on a cross, when his right hand shall be cut off, his body pinched in six places with red-hot irons, his arms and legs broken to pieces, and after that to be impaled alive before the Town House on the Square, his dead body afterwards to be thrown on a wheel outside the town *at the usual place*, and to be left a prey to the birds of the air.' Could any torture of the Inquisition be worse? But these tortures were in 1696, years before the enlightened days of Le Vaillant. The half-breed slaves of the early days were a source of worry to the ruling council; several times in the *Journals* one may come across a case of a freeman or burgher marrying his emancipated slave:

'"Maria of Bengal," a Hindoo woman, set the fashion, and the famous interpretress, Eva, during her extraordinary career of diplomatic and immoral episodes within the walls of the Fort, where she wore garments made by kind Maria van Riebeek, or outside the walls, where she wore the filthy skins of her own people, the Hottentots, beguiled the senior surgeon to such lengths that he was granted permission to marry her. He fortunately was killed during an expedition to Madagascar, but not before he had had sufficient time to regret the beguilings of Eva.'

Many of the slaves were children of convicts sent from Batavia and the Malay Settlements. Here is the case of a half-breed girl, which was sent to Batavia for judgment:

'Regarding the half-breed girl, you order that she is to serve the Company until her twenty-second year, when she is to be emancipated on condition that she makes profession of the Christian faith, and, moreover, pays R. 150 for her education. We are well aware that this rule is observed in the case of *slave children having Dutch fathers*, but whether it applies to children of *convict women* by Dutch fathers, as in the case of this girl, would like to hear from you.'

When Le Vaillant wrote, all these rules had changed, though even he talks with some mystery of a runaway slave having received a *slight cor-*

rection. When slaves landed at the Cape, they cost from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and fifty dollars (*i.e.*, rix-dollars) each, that being about £22 10s. to £27 10s. The negroes from Mozambique and those of Madagascar were the best labourers; the Indians were much sought after for service in the house and in the town. Malays were the most intelligent and the most dangerous. Barrow, in whose days (1798) the price of slaves had gone up considerably, tells a story showing the revengeful spirit of the Malay. A slave, thinking that he had served his master sufficiently long and with great fidelity, and having also paid him several sums of money, was tempted to demand his liberty. He was met with a refusal. He straightway went and murdered his fellow-slave. He was taken up and brought before the Court, acknowledged that the slave he had murdered was his friend, but said that the best form of revenge he could think of was not to murder his master, but to deprive him of a slave worth the value of a thousand rix-dollars (*i.e.*, £187 10s.) and of another thousand by bringing himself to the gallows!

The Creole slaves were sold for a higher price than the others, and were often 'acquainted with a trade,' when their price became exorbitant. They were clothed properly, but went barefooted. Twenty to thirty slaves were generally found in

one house. 'That insolent set of domestics called *footmen*,' writes the French explorer, 'are not to be seen at the Cape; for pride and luxury have not yet introduced these idle and contemptible attendants who in Europe line the ante-chambers of the rich, and who in their deportment exhibit every mark of impertinence!' The abolition of the Rack and Torture was responsible for an extraordinary occurrence: the public executioner made an application for a pension in lieu of the emoluments he used to receive for the breaking of legs and arms; the second hangman upon inquiry learnt that not only did the English of this new régime abolish the Rack and Torture, but that they were not thinking of establishing breaking on the wheel; this was more than he could bear, and, fearing starvation, he went and hanged himself! Strange irony of fate.

In every family a slave was kept whose sole duty was the gathering of wood. It was strictly forbidden to gather any fuel, scrub, or bush on the Downs or Flats, so the slave would go out every morning up the mountains, and would return at night with two or three small bundles of faggots—the produce of six or eight hours' hard labour—swinging at the two ends of a bamboo carried across his shoulder. In some families more than one slave was kept for this purpose, and this gives a very good idea of the scarcity of wood at the

Cape as late as 1798. From the diaries of that time one gathers that, though wood was only used for cooking purposes—as only the kitchen possessed a fireplace—yet the cost of fuel for a small household amounted to forty or fifty pounds a year.

CHAPTER III

IN THE BLUE SHADOW OF TABLE MOUNTAIN

THE blue shadow of Table Mountain falls straight across the 'Flats,' or the sandy isthmus of the Cape Peninsula—a long, intensely blue line stretching from one ocean to the other.

In 1653 this shadow meant something more than a beautiful shade; it was a boundary-line; it meant safety and shade within its depth, war and barbarians beyond.

Along its borders were dotted small forts and watch-houses; there were even the beginnings of a canal running parallel with the definite shade, to intensify its significance.

The Dutch East India Company's long-suffering and harassed Commander, Van Riebeek, with infinite undertaking of dangers and difficulties, wild beasts, Hottentots, and quicksands, rode across it, and fixed its boundaries as proper limits to the Settlements, which its most honourable directors were pleased to call 'Goode Hoop.'

The blue shadow begins on the other side of the

Wind Mountain or Devil's Peak, and we will go where it leads.

In 1663 there was a narrow road running close up to the mountain rather higher up than the present dusty main road. It ran as far as Rondebosch, or 'Rond die Bostje,' whose round-wood traditions are untraceable, Van Riebeek having given orders that only the outer bushes should be preserved as a convenient kraal for cattle. Along this narrow road a small ox-cart rumbled every day from the fort in Cape Town, dragging home logs of wood from the almost unknown land beyond; its driver running momentary risk of meeting in the narrow way the lions, tigers, or rhino, that roamed the mountain slopes.

One end of the shadow falls into the sea at Maitland or Paarden Island, and covers some stretches of beach, small houses, and railway workshops. There the rivers meet—the Diep River from Milnerton, the Liesbeek and the Black Rivers from across the Flats. They join and form the Salt River, a wide, overflowing stream that is constantly flooding the green lands between the sea and the old Trek road to the north.

In the old days, this beach between Salt River and Milnerton was the setting of tragedies: backed in on the north and east by the Blaauwberg Mountains and the Stellenbosch Ranges, and on the south-east by the Hottentot's Holland.

From behind the Blaauwberg, or Blueberg, came that long thin stream of Saldanhas from the north, lighting their fires among the rushes of the Diep River and the Salt Pans near the Tigerberg or Leopard Mountains, which are the green, corn-sown hills of Durbanville and Klipheuvel.

They brought with them, past the outpost 'Doornhoop' on the Salt River, to the very gates of Van Riebeek's Fort, then standing where the railway station now is, cattle and sheep and wonderful stories of rich countries to the north and north-east, where kings lived in stationary stone houses and had much gold, their wives loaded with bracelets and having necklaces of sparkling white stones! The little dysentery-stricken settlement, growing thin and determined on a carrot and a snack of rhinoceros, opened the gates, bought the scurvy cattle, believed the stories, and had visions of reaching the fabulously renowned river 'Spirito Sancto.' They dragged their waggons and their precious oxen and horses over the scrub and sand-dunes; and now one may see the fruits of these brave but small expeditions in carefully compiled but imaginative maps and plans, telling of how one or another reached the banks of the Orange River and found 'a great desert,' but found no great kings, no gold, no cities.

Lying close to the shore are many wrecks, an old order which has changed but slowly.

BLAAUWBERG AND HEAD OF TABLE BAY

This corner of the bay was a dangerous roadstead before the year 1653.

A scurvy gang of bastard natives called 'Watermen' or 'Beach Rangers,' crawling like mammoth cockroaches among the seaweed and wreckage, had eked out their monstrous living long before the *Harlem* dragged her anchor and stranded at the mouth of the Salt River.

A grand string of names in the records of these old wrecks; no cheap sloops, galleots, or second-rate pirating-hulks, but big, stately merchantmen: one, from France, *La Maréchale*, with a Bishop on board who is uncommonly like the man who became a Cardinal during the reign of 'Le Roi Soleil.' He was on his way to Madagascar with something political behind his mad-sounding schemes for church-building (on such a sparsely inhabited island) and for personally endowing the buildings to the tune of hundreds of thousands; it may be heresy, but there was something politically consequent in the extraordinary story of this wreck of *La Maréchale* and the energy of the French seal-fisheries at Saldanha Bay.

To continue the rôle of backstairs glory: an English ship—a well-known name, *The Mayflower*—on her way from the east with John Howard, her captain, got a bad time in the terrible bay, tearing winds coming from the 'Wind Mountain' and across from Robben Island.

The clearing of the roadsteads became almost a yearly festival and a certain necessity.

So the blue shadow begins by the sea and ends by the sea; but to reach the other end will take us in a motor more than thirty minutes; an ox-waggon lumbering across sandy dunes and along stony mountain-paths took the early settlers something more than a day or two. We did it riding, and took something like a month; but one must compromise to really enjoy life.

We rode one day along the main road to Rondebosch, where the old Commanders would ride out two hundred years ago, to inspect the Company's granary, 'Groote Schuur,' and the Company's guest-house, 'Rustenburg.'

The Cape Town length of the road has little of interest. 'Roodebloem' comes into the list of old homesteads; and down in the swampy green fields of Observatory Road, where the clerk life of Cape Town has its two acres and a cow, and near the Royal Observatory, lived the Company's free miller; and the Liesbeek waters worked his mill. There is still an old mill in existence, but probably of later date.

In 1658 the Company gave grants of land along the Liesbeek River, mostly all along the west side, beginning with the swampy land below the Wind Mountain or Devil's Peak, granted to the Commander's nephew-in-law, Jan Reyniez, and

TIGERBERG AND DIEP RIVER

W. Westhofen
1910

ending on the south side, somewhere in Wynberg, with the lands of Jacob Cloeten of Cologne. The burghers, having formed into three companies—one called Vredens Company—lying in lands on the wrong side of the river at Rosebank, sent in a petition, which was forwarded with all due delay to the Commander and Council, who, 'having found, according to the many deeds and diagrams, that the land is quite dangerously situated, the owners being exposed to the depredations of the Hottentots,' granted new lands near the Company's orchard, called 'Rustenburg.'

The conditions laid down by the Company to freemen varied slightly in each little colony: there were three along the Blue shadow:

'1. They might fish in the rivers, but not for sale.

'2. The Company would *sell* them at ploughing time a plough and twelve oxen. The ground should be theirs for ever.

'3. That they should grow tobacco.'

These are some of the rules. Everyone knows the story of how the rules later became unbearable—the fixing of selling-prices by the Company, the paying of taxes, the limitations set on selling produce to the ships.

The conditions, however, and the dangers from the Hottentots on the east side of the shadow, were thankfully accepted.

In the old records there is the entry which explains the position of these little colonies:

'*February* 21, 1657.

'Fine sunshine, fickle weather.'

'Many having been informed of the intention of the Masters to establish freemen all about and under favourable conditions, a party of five selected a locality on the other side of the Fresh River (Liesbeek), named by us the Amstel, *below* the forests and beyond it where our woodcutters are, near the crooked tree about three leagues from the Fort, and as long and broad as they wished it, on condition that they were to remain on the other side of the river. Another party of four selected a spot about a league nearer, at the Rondebosjen, on this side of the river or Amstel, from the small bridge leading to the forest as far as the spot chosen for the redoubt, near where the bird trap is to be built. The boundary of that land will be three-quarters of a league long, the river will divide them from the other party, and they will go back as far as they like to Table Mountain and the other mountains. The party of five may go forward towards the mountains of the continent proper, as far as they like; these two parties are therefore stationed right on the isthmus in fruitful soil. The further colony has therefore been named Amstel, or the Groeneveld, and the farthest redoubt will be about quarter of a league beyond it. The nearer colony at Rondebosjen (which is to be converted into a cattle kraal and to be provided with a gate)

is to be called the "Dutch garden." A redoubt will also be built there.'

And then began some amusing correspondence between the Honorable Commander and his honorable employers at Amsterdam.

Very few of these freemen had wives. Jan Reyniez had married the Commander's niece Lysbeth, Jacob Cloeten sent to Cologne for Frau Fychje Raderoffjes, and a few other wives were ordered out; but, grumbled the Council from this strenuous settlement, 'Here are good freemen, who would willingly marry if there were any material (*stoffe*)'—to quote from the old documents—

'These young men have accordingly prayed and begged us [the Council spared no words] to ask girls (*meif-jen*) for them, whom they may marry. We therefore request outward-bound families to bring with them strong, healthy farm girls, and the Company would make the condition that, when arriving at the Cape, the good ones might be retained and all others permitted to go on; as between Patria and this, it will be easily discovered what sort of persons they are.'

So in like manner, as bread fell from heaven to the Israelites in the desert, or as the British Government supplied wives to their Virginian Colonies, came wives to the freemen at the Cape. But rather hard for the families who were to have their good maids retained.

It is a surprising thing, in looking over the old Roll-call, to find so few old Cape names. The varying forms of spelling may account for this.

In the old title-deeds one finds some lands in Table Valley granted to one Cornelius Mostaert, a well-known name ; then there are mentioned Cloeten, Cloetas, Muller, Theunissen, Visagie, and a Van der Byl, who was a 'messenger of justice,' and rode from Cape Town to the Bosheuvel on his rounds ; but the large majority are almost unknown names.

But we have arrived at Rustenburg, off the wagon road which leads to the forest on the slopes of the Bosheuvel, or 'Hen and Chickens Hill,' where Amman Erichiszen, the keeper of the forest lands, planted most energetically the great pine-trees which now, like an invincible army, have marched over all the lands.

It is said that the original buildings at Rustenburg have been destroyed. Marinus and I choose to think differently, as the position of the present building must be on the exact spot. Rustenburg has degenerated into a high school for girls, and bears itself like an aristocrat in the stocks. Its long teak windows and rows of Doric pillars look imposing enough to suggest the ancient glories which are so carefully recorded: 'This day the Commander takes out a party to inspect the Company's corn-lands at Rond die Bosje'—Van

Riebeek on his famous horse, 'Groote Vos'; Maria de Quellerai, his wife, in a coach with the guests; Governors on their way to the East—the Great Drakenstein, Van Oudtshoorn, Governor Van Goens, the Java Commander who gave so much advice on his way to and fro, the Van der Stels still working in the East; the Admirals of Return and Outward Fleets—Vlemdingh, Van Tromp, De Reuyter—with their wives and families; the famous Commander of the French Fleet, M. le Marquis du Quesne, and so many others. Do their ghosts disturb the dreams of the little high-school 'backfish'?

At the back of the Rustenburg buildings, to the left, following a path which was probably a way to the Groote Schuur, are the remains of some old orchard lands, and some years ago I remember going with a troop of excited girls, in the terrifying hour of twilight, to see the old slave burial-place, which lay to the right of a path leading to the summer-house and 'Rustbank'—a small white seat still to be seen near the little red-roofed tea-house. To the right of this spot is the house called 'The Woolsack,' where Rudyard Kipling has lived every summer for years. Here were remains of graves, old bits of tombstone, old decaying skulls—oh! the horror and pleasure of these evening desecrations! An orgie for the emotions which makes one adore the past.

Above the Woolsack towers the Wind Mountain, on its slopes the white and grey granite temple of the Rhodes Monument.

The Rhodes Memorial.

One day someone sat gazing at the big Devil's Peak, which shadows Groote Schuur and stands like a rampart of the Citadel Mountain behind. As he gazed he became inspired; he said: 'There should be a monument to Rhodes, just there, on those steep green slopes under the Watch House, where the heavy Dutch cannon were dragged up to defend the bay.' The Rhodes trustees rose up and formed the chorus.

So began the drama of the monument.

The players were reinforced. Watts from London sent a huge bronze group, Physical Energy, which is the beginning in the game of progress. John Swan, with his wonderful head of a Michael Angelo prophet and a later Roman Emperor, Rodin of the English, came himself and drew designs for paradoxical lions.

This was our train of mind as we rode up the fir avenue of Groote Schuur bordered with blue periwinkle flowers.

Home of Rhodes and a hostel for passing visitors of name and fame, it was the 'Great Barn' of long ago — the Great Barn where the 'Company's' corn, grown under such difficulties, was stored in

BLUE HYDRANGEAS AT GROOTE SCHUUR

times of plenty, that there should be food for the Company's servants, ever busy fighting off the Hottentots across the Flats, when the Batavian Directors, with great omnipotence, decreed that the homeward-bound fleet should find no room to carry rice to the vegetable settlement of Bonne Esperance. For the Company settled in the shadow, not to found an empire beyond the seas, but to 'grow vegetables for their ships.'

Groote Schuur, the great barn with its present building carefully imitative, its masses of blue hydrangeas and wisteria, white-walled terraces of plumbago and magenta bougainvillæa, and its tall pine-trees and deep, fern-banked glen.

There is something adorable in the green plaque over the front entrance—and instinctively it is *chapeau bas*—a small group of Dutchmen and Hottentots on the seashore—'The Landing of Van Riebeek.' The simplicity of the thing starts the weaving of the spell, which, in the plod, plod of life at the Cape, is a forgotten aspect. No nation can ever be great that has no time for sentimental patriotism. Why is it that this Africa cannot hold its people? There is talk of the Call of the Sun, but it does not hold fast, this Sun call. If Progress goes north and all new effort must wander away from the Patria, it must not be allowed to wander without the shibboleth of sentiment. A domestic simile would be invidious.

Marinus, my guide, is used to my wanderings, and the horses are slowly climbing the steep gravelled path behind the house. Past cool woods filled with arum lilies and fantastic, twisted young oaks, looking to the heated imagination like fauns and satyrs, which send back one's mind to a long-ago atmosphere of mythology.

This atmosphere increases, and culminates at the Temple of the monument.

In a large sloping field to the right of the path live, in happy monotony, four or five lamas, while in another teak-gated enclosure the striped zebras are gazing in mild surprise at a fierce wildebeeste stalking along the other side of the thin wire fence.

Far across the purple sandy flats with their blue barriers to the north—the 'Mountains of Africa' —lie the big vleis, or lakes, and near them the tall white spire of the tiny Lutheran church, little shepherd of all the German souls who cluster round in white farms, growing lettuce on week-days and singing Lutheran hymns on Sunday.

At the top of the gravel road, almost buried in a kloof of stunted oaks and yellow protea-bush, is a cottage, where the two sons of that fat King of the Matabele, Lobengula, lived and were educated. What has happened to them since Rhodes's death I do not know; they may be studying French and science at the Sorbonne, or, having married somebody's 'respectable English housemaid,' may be

the happy fathers of a tinted family of pupil teachers or typewriters!

We climbed higher, and were soon in the shadow of the Devil's Peak or Doves Peak.

The name 'Devil' must have drifted from the 'Cape' to the Wind Mountain. 'Windberg' was the ordinary name for the Peak, and 'Devil's Cape' was the name given to the Cape many years before Diaz's ship was driven round into the Indian Ocean.

Humboldt, the German traveller, has interesting information about this name. He says that on Fra Mauro's world chart, published between 1457 and 1459, the Cape of Good Hope is marked 'Capo Di Diab!'

Diaz, to his surprise and unintention, rounded the Cape in 1486.

But even before this, others than the 'Flying Dutchman' sailed these seas. On the old planisphere of 'Semito,' made in 1306, the tricorned shape of South Africa is shown, and in a note added later to the planisphere it is stated that an Indian junk coming from the East circumnavigated this Cape 'Diab.'

To those who have thought of this Cape as shrouded in mystery until the Portuguese sailors rounded it, the shock might be similar to the state of mind of the Ignoble Vulgar (used in the sense of ignorance), who find, one day, that quite a decent system of education existed before the

Flood; but shattering a fallacious perspective may not necessarily widen a horizon, and Sheba's Mines of Ophir, the voyages of the Phœnicians, Moorish slavers, Indian junks, gold, and apes, and peacocks, and Flying Dutchmen, may still be in the jig-saw pattern border of South Africa.

Groups of almond-trees guide us to two cement and iron cages. There, lying blinking benignly in the sun, are the famous lions of Groote Schuur—almost monuments in themselves.

Did not their ancestors roam over these very slopes of the mountain, and swoop down into the cornfields and ricefields of the Company's burghers, seeking water and shelter from the raging north winds, in the comfortable piece of land 'Rond die Bosch' below?

Passing the lions, we are still mounting to the east ridge of the Peak. Somewhere George Eliot says, 'attempts at description are stupid—how can one describe a human being?' The assertion does not apply entirely to human beings. Who but refuses to bear attempt at minute description, and who but would fail in the attempt to describe the wonderful view which suddenly appears—the shining blue rim of Table Bay, a harmony in blue and silver, Watts's 'Energy' in silhouette, the giant horse and rider dominating a huge precipice, the precipice which is the narrow, flat, and sandy isthmus of the Peninsula? All round and down the slopes are soft, green forests of firs.

THE BLUE SHADOW—VIEW FROM RHODES' MONUMENT

The inscription on the statue runs: 'Physical Energy, by G. F. Watts, R.A., and by him given to the Genius of Rhodes.'

From the foot of the group in bronze and granite we look up the huge steps to the grey granite temple, the grey rocks of the mountain behind, and the 'Silver-Trees' keep the eye and senses running along the gamut of greys.

Behind the tall pillars runs another inscription—'Dedicated to the Spirit and Life Work of Cecil John Rhodes.' The paradox to this will be found in the statue, or bust, of Cecil John, to be placed by the trustees in the niche below. It is in the nature of man to embody, allegorically, in human form, virtues and vices, but surely it were better to leave the good deeds of the man, which belonged to the Spirit, in the care of this wonderful grey granite temple. To the Life and Spirit! Few bodies make temples worthy of the Spirit, and Cecil John failed to prove the rule. But 'how truly great is the Actual, is the Thing, that has rescued itself from bottomless depths of theory and possibility, and stands as a definite indisputable fact. . . .' and the Knowledge and the Practice, which are the elements of the mighty Physical Energy, hang over the abyss of the Known, the Practicable.

The man and his life 'rest on solidity and some kind of truth.'

So we came down from the heights.

CHAPTER IV

'PARADISE' AND THE BARNARDS

From Newlands we rode, one glorious afternoon, up a small, conical hill at the back of Fernwood, or the old homestead 'Boshof.' There are several ways of arriving, but we, full of enthusiasm, chose to take a stony path hedged by scented wild-geraniums and ripening blackberry hedges, along which more than a hundred years ago a big wagon had rolled, dragging up the hill, as far as the ravines and rocks would allow, two occupants—Mr. Barnard, His Excellency's secretary, and Lady Anne, his wife.

There has been a great 'Barnard' cult of late, and the people who have wondered at the romantic and witty correspondence of Lady Anne and the Secretary of State for War, Lord Melville, have perhaps gained some geographical knowledge of the Cape Peninsula one hundred years ago. I adore Anne for her sense of humour; Marinus adores her for her faithfulness to Barnard, whom for various reasons I have depicted to him as a dullish and obliging man.

THE SOUTHERN PART OF FALSE BAY, WITH CAPE HANGCLIP

Behind this overgrown hill at the top of the Newlands Avenue lies 'Paradise,' where Anne Barnard lived during the summer, and which she called her Trianon!

So Mecca-wards we rode, with the gigantic grey wall of Table Mountain towering before us.

We turned our horses round to face the Flats! We saw the great plains before us, once so bare that you could have seen a Hottentot crawling among the sandhills miles away; the Bosheuvel Hill, or 'Hen and Chickens,' standing out to the right, with its crown of silver-trees shivering and shining in the sun. To the east lay False Bay—thousands and thousands of emeralds set in cream; to the left, the dull, low, crouching Tygerberg Hills, full of propriety, sleek and smooth. Below us lay the Bishopscourt woods—the old Company's 'Forest lands' hiding the river and the squirrels and the black babies of Little Paradise, or Protea, with the branches of their enormous oak-trees—*chapeauz bas* to Wilhelm Adrian Van der Stel.

Anne Barnard wrote other letters than those to Lord Melville; she wrote in long charming letters to her sisters at home a description of the pretty little place called 'Paradise,' halfway up the hill, which Lord Macartney wished her to have; 'how she could not drive up the hill, but had to alight,' and walk, and thought the way to Paradise the proverbial path, hard and steep, and thought less

and less of His Excellency's offer the steeper the path became. She writes—all out of breath:

'On turning round, a sequestered low road appeared, over which oaks met in cordial embrace—the path which, suddenly turning, presented to us an old farmhouse, charming in no point of architecture, but charming from the mountain which reared itself three thousand feet perpendicular above its head, with such a variety of spiral and gothic forms, wooded and picturesque, as to be a complete contrast to the hill which we had ascended or the plains over which we gazed. Before the house, *which was raised a few steps from the court*, there was a row of orange-trees. A garden, well stocked with fruit-trees, was behind the house, through which ran a hasty stream of water descending from the mountain; on the left a grove of fir-trees, whose long stems, agitated by the slightest breeze of wind, knocked their heads together like angry bullocks in a most ludicrous manner.'

'Anne! What do you say to this?'

Mr. Barnard speaks in much admiration. Anne, still breathless, feeling happier, but her skirts are torn by the blackberries and low bushes:

'Why, that I like it, I am vexed to say, beyond all things.'

His Excellency's Secretary, becoming more elated (Anne having bright pink in her flushed cheeks): 'And if you do, my dear Anne, why should we not

have it?' (This with all acknowledgment of the lamentable fact, which I impress upon Marinus, that Anne's approval is the only thing which will matter; Marinus always argues that in the other scale are 'Robin Gray' and that packet of letters which Lord Melville tied up with blue ribbon.)

Anne answers the adoring Barnard, not too decisively: 'Because the World's end is not so distant as this spot from the haunts of men.'

Barnard's last effort is worthy of a diplomatist; he sighed: 'It's very charming, however.'

They visited a number of other places, but Barnard's sigh won the day; and a new road was made to 'Paradise' by the slaves—a road we were presently to see, still showing the hard brick foundation, winding and hugging the mountain from the present Groote Schuur Road.

There is a delicious description of a day at 'Paradise' in the wonderful 'Lives of the Lindsays' —the mad, witty Lindsays! and Anne was one of them—and she wrote as amusingly and wittily to her sisters as she wrote to Melville, and she tied up the beautiful Cape wild flowers in gauze bags to send to 'my dearest Margaret.'

I sometimes think that the letters, which are known to be in a famous collection kept from the world, must be less philosophical, less cynical, less amusing, and more in accord with the mood in which Anne wrote 'Old Robin Gray.'

That in 1797.

This in 1909—Marinus and I asking our way of an old black woodcutter, with feathery green 'Newlands Creeper' twisted round his hat—that heirloom of the old slave descendant—a broad, passive grin crinkling over his face: 'Jaa, Missis; Missis want ole slavy-house—want get by ole "Paradise"? Yaa, vat I know ole Paradise; working by dese woods tirty years—fader, grandfader, all working by "Paradise."' So we followed him, our guide, our ponies scrambling up the slippery, moss-covered pathway, the trees growing low and thick, obscuring the sunlight, the dark figure of the woodman always running before us. Deeper and deeper we plunged into the low woods, when turning suddenly to the right and going slightly downhill, quite behind the fir-covered koppie, we came into 'Paradise.' Found! and in ruins! And I picked ferns from the walls of Anne Barnard's dining-room!

Here was the courtyard with the chief buildings facing north; on the right, the long stoep showing remains of the curved, rounded steps. On the left are the walls of lower buildings—probably the kitchens which the Barnards built.

We left our ponies with the black man and pushed our way in silence through the overgrown garden, all the terraces still banked up by small stone walls, now moss-covered, past little garden

paths running along the mountain-stream, and fig-trees long since overgrown and forgetful of bearing fruit; and higher up towards the mountain we found two graves and four or five chestnut-trees—'the finest chestnuts I ever saw by many, many degrees,' says Anne.

But wherever we went the thin, twisted, fantastic oaks, like deformed gnomes reared in the dark, barred the way of 'Paradise' to intruders, and with the rustling breeze the frightened squirrels and the ghosts of this Trianon rushed away before us into the gloom.

Once, when sitting alone, only breathing a little Greek poem of praise to Pan, I thought I saw a ghost of this dead 'Paradise,' forming etheresque, vague and elusive, between the green hanging strands of creepers. . . . It was only the web of a wood-spider caught in a shaft of sunlight which had shot through the heavy roof of leaves. The garden which should have grown the most sensitive plants now grows weeds; only in a deserted corner we found a quaint, aromatic pink flower with a scent which suggested the East.

The light was fading; Anne in her letters remarks upon this: 'The sun sets here in "Paradise" two hours sooner than on the other side of the hill, which I am told marks its height, but with lamps and candles it makes no difference. We have nothing here to annoy us—except mosquitoes,

and the baboons who come down in packs to pillage our garden of the fruit with which the trees are laden.'

So we recovered our ponies from the woodcutter, who told us he had cut wood round 'Paradise' for over thirty years, and followed the red-brick slave-road which brought us to the middle of the Newlands Avenue. 'Paradise,' with its shy ghosts, its decay, its charm, and its memories of Anne, we placed at the back of our minds like little sacred hidden temples, and the essence of it all burnt like incense in their shrines.

CHAPTER V

THE LIESBEEK RIVER

We traced one day the old boundary-line, the Liesbeek River, from its mouth near the Salt River to its sources in the woods of Paradise and Bishopscourt.

In some of the old record-books I found this entry, which will do as a prologue to the chapter:

'Cabo de Bonne Esperance,
'*September*, 1652.

'Riebeek and the Carpenter proceed' (it was proceeding with some great care and danger in those days) 'to the back of Table Mountain' (a vague term for everything which was not visible from the fort). 'Here to examine, whether there are any forests other than already mentioned on the Lion Mountain, as the timber from home has been much spoilt, and is too light for the dwellings, in consequence of the heavy winds from the mountain we dare not leave our heaviest houses without supports. We found in the kloofs fine, thick, fairly strong trees, somewhat like the ash and beech, heavy and difficult to be transported. We found on some trees the dates 1604, 1620,

and 1622, but did not know who carved them. Astonished that so many East India voyagers have maintained that there is no wood here. Found also fine soil, intersected by countless rivulets, the biggest as broad as the Amstel (Liesbeek), and running into the Salt River.'

This well-watered ground round Bishopscourt and Newlands became the Company's forest lands.

In 1656, when the Commander went on another tree-hunting expedition, there is another entry:

'*August* 31, 1656.

'The Commander proceeds to the cornland, has some tobacco sown, and proceeds behind Table Mountain, where the forests are. He found very many sorts of trees similar to pine, but no real pines, and not one higher than 6, 7, or 8 feet.'

The Commander grew to love the forests, and land was granted him on the banks of the Liesbeek (where Bishopscourt now stands) in an almost dangerous situation, for day and night a watch was kept on the Hottentots lurking in the bushes of the Hen and Chickens Hill, or secretly striving to drive their cattle across the river into the Company's grazing-ground. The river, the watch-houses reported, was fordable, and cattle were constantly stolen. And as we were now pushing our way through the bushes and brambles along the overgrown banks, so in 1658 did Van

Riebeek ride out with Van Goens 'all through the reeds, shrubs, lilies, and marshes.'

The old Diary goes on:

'He found the forest so closely grown from the one point to the other that no opening could be found than the wagon road, which might be easily closed with a bar. No cattle could pass through this wood, even if thousands of Hottentots were driving them. It is about two hours distant from the fort, as far as Visagie's dwelling and brewery below the foot of the Bosheuvel, where the Commander one morning showed Commander Van Goens, when they were walking over the Bosheuvel (with a Hottentot who did not wish that land should be cultivated there), a spot on which to build a small redoubt or watch-house, to protect the lands in the neighbourhood, and to which spot the River Liesbeek could be made navigable for small boats from the fort and through the Salt River. But as the Liesbeek is thickly studded with reeds, etc., $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 feet high, it will be necessary to make a clearing on the sides, in order to examine the whole more carefully.'

Then started a great labour, and many seamen were busy for months clearing the river, until, with much triumph, it was written in the journal that in 'some places it was found to be the depth of a pike.'

The river as far as Rondebosch is not interesting, and often impossible to follow, as it runs through

private grounds and is very overgrown by oaks and poplars. At the extreme end of Rondebosch it becomes wider. At Westerford, or the West Ford, the main road crosses it on a bridge, and the old history is perpetuated in the name given to a shaded road running past the brewery—Boundary Road.

At Westerford is one of the old, fast-disappearing Outspan places—a big, bare spot under the oaks, with the white walls and thatch outhouses of the homestead which once belonged to Mostaert, 'living on the other side of the Schuur.' Here we saw, as we rode past, some wagons outspanned, the small black boys busy watering the mules and oxen in the river below, farmers lying about wreathed in tobacco smoke—the old days seem so quaintly characteristic, in spite of the near proximity of a wine-store and a forage-loft. A scene of busy lethargy—if such a paradox is permitted. I imagined how much more it meant in the olden days, when the hard-grown corn, and flax, and hemp, and tobacco were brought in from the brave little colony in the Groeneveld; how they rushed through the deep ford to this outspan of safety on the right side of the river.

The river runs through a lovely wood at the bottom of Government House, Newlands, and on its steep opposite bank is 'The Vineyard,' which little place—lately belonging to the Manuel family

—was designed and built by the Barnards, when the angel with the flaming sword, in the guise of a new Governor—decrepit, weak old Sir George Younge, with his debts and dissipations—turned them out of 'Paradise.'

Anne writes to Melville from 'The Vineyard' on March 14, 1800:

'I am living out of town at our little country place, which we purchased, built a cottage on, and called "The Vineyard," removed from all party work, except working parties in our fields, rooting up of palmiet roots[1] and planting of fir-trees and potatoes.'

'The Vineyard,' which is in due order the correct place to fly to when one has lost 'Paradise,' must have been a great refuge to the Barnards. Those were troublous times of social intrigue—the old order and the new—the Barnards weeping over the departure of the poor Governor Macartney, wary, well-bred and witty, all crippled with gout; old Younge, arriving with his sycophants; the General, Dundas, busy fighting the natives and courting the rather dull lady who came out to marry him; the entire gang eyeing poor Anne in her comfortable stronghold in the Castle, and (one may gather) keeping no judicious guard over their tongues. Anne rose to the occasion, offered her

[1] Palmiet is a high, strong river-weed.

Castle home to the General and his Cummings gave a good party for the ladies of the staff, and retired to watch the dénouement from the comforting distance at 'The Vineyard,' and to write philosophical letters on the political situation, which, in the district of Graff-Reinet, was of an inky blackness.

The long oak avenues of Newlands House on the opposite bank gave us Canaletto-like perspectives of the low white house and twisted chimneys, the green lawns and deer-park, and the intensest blue hydrangeas. I have seen a drawing of the house as it was in the time of Lord Charles Somerset, with oval verandah, otherwise very much the same. It ultimately became the property of an old Van der Pool, who left it to the famous Hiddingh family, who have for years leased it to the Government. A namesake of his was an amusing character, living in semi-darkness and dirt, hoarding up his unprofitable wealth. An old black woman who was once his cook told a very good story of this old miser. Van der Pool was noted for having in his cellars the best wine at the Cape—no one ever tasted it. He hated spinach, but spinach grew in the garden, and therefore must not be wasted. In the dark dining-room, with an old gazette serving for a tablecloth, sat old man Van der Pool waiting for his dinner. Up came the dinner, 'Saartje' with a big dish of spinach rotten with long keeping. Old man Van der Pool cursed Saartje and

OAK AVENUE, NEWLANDS

spinach in best Dutch, and 'made a plan.' '"Saartje," say ole Bass, very gentle, soft like, "go fetch me from die cellar a best big bottle of ole Pontac." I run fetch ole Pontac; ole Bass, he put die bottle jus so, in front of him. "Now," he say, "Saartje, you trek." I trek out not farder dan die door keyhole. I see ole Bass pour out best old Pontac and put die spinach in front too. "Now," he say, "Hendrick, you see dis fine, werry, werry fine ole Pontac, you eat dis verdommte spinach first, den you drink dis wine, wot's been standin, Hendrickie, Kerl, for werry many years." Ole Bass, he eat, eat fast as I nebber seen him before; den, when all spinach done, ole Bass he pour die wine back in die bottle. He laf, laf, and he say, putting his finger to his nose, "Hi! Hendrick, I fool you dis time, I tink, fool you pretty well."'

We left the river for a time and got up a side avenue into the big Newlands Avenue, near Montebello and the brewery. All this estate, once called the Palmboom, or Brewery Estate, belonged to old Dirk Van Rheenen, or Van Rhénen, Anne Barnard's friend, the most hospitable man in all the Peninsula. Dirk got the Government beer contract and built a wonderful mansion, designed with all its white stateliness and Doric pillars by a Frenchman who came out to build the Amsterdam Battery—at least, Marinus says so. But I have another story which is as well told. Anne Barnard

is my authority, and she says she considers the Van Rheenen house possessed the air of a European mansion, it being erected by his own slaves from an Italian drawing he happened to meet with. There is a quaint description of how the Barnards' party went a-dining with Mynheer Van Rheenen:

'The family received us all with open countenances of gladness and hospitality, but the openest countenance and the most resolute smile, amounting to a grin, was borne by a calf's head, nearly as large as that of an ox, which was boiled entire and served up with the ears whole and a pair of gallant horns. The teeth were more perfect than dentist ever made, and no white satin was so pure as the skin of the countenance. This melancholy merry smiler and a tureen of bird's-nest soup were the most distinguished *plats* in the entertainment. The soup was a mass of the most aromatic nastiness I ever tasted, somewhat resembling macaroni perfumed with different scents; it is a Chinese dish, and was formerly so highly valued in India that five-and-twenty guineas was the price of a tureenful of it. The "springer"[1] also made its appearance, boiled in large slices—admirable! It is a fish which would make the fortune of anyone who could carry it by spawn to England. The party was good, the game abundant, but ill-cooked, the beef bad, the mutton by no means superior, the poultry remarkably good, and the venison of the highest

[1] A fresh-water fish.

flavour, but without fat; this, however, was supplied by its being larded very thickly—all sorts of fruits in great perfection, pines excepted, of which there are not many at the Cape. Mynheer carried us off after dinner to see his bloom of tulips and other flowers; the tulips are very fine, and the carnations beautiful; *all were sheltered from the winds by myrtle hedges.* Our gentlemen returned delighted with the day they had spent, and very glad to have the prospect of another such.'

Gigantic appetites, hadn't they? And if Anne hadn't tasted it all how could she have commented with so much definiteness? They grew tulips here! Why not? But they won't grow, is the answer. I expect the secret lies in the neat myrtle hedges, which can yet be seen in some old-fashioned gardens in Sea Point and Cape Town. They drank well and unwisely, also, these Peninsula people. Thompson remarks upon this in his book on the Cape: 'The Pokaalie cup, like the blessed beer of Bradwardine, too often drowns both reason and refinement.'

CHAPTER VI

THE BOSHEUVEL, OR HEN AND CHICKENS HILL

We crossed the river at the bottom of the Bishopscourt gardens, and found ourselves looking down the long fir avenue, arched as perfectly as the nave of a Gothic cathedral. Opposite, ran another little avenue along the side of the hill, and to the right, staring at us like black and white toadstools of monstrous size out of the green gloom, the thatched cottages of Bishopscourt.

We chose a little narrow pathway running up the hill from the middle avenue, winding through low protea-bush and silver-trees.

There is cruel, continuous, silent fighting on this hillside—the battle between the silver-trees and the firs. The firs, or pines, who came here last, are creeping, year by year, higher and higher up the hill; year by year the brave little 'witteboomen' (white trees) are driven before this strong green army of invaders; soon there will be a last stand on the hilltop—the survival of the fittest. We shall all see it; we are seeing it every day of our lives—

SILVER TREES AND WILD GERANIUMS

and will no one help? The pines are helped by unthinking man in his horrible materialism—the silver-tree branches are easy to break off, and make good fuel. Day by day, like a file of gaudy beetles, the dwellers of 'Protea' crawl along our little path and down again to the river huts, with loaded shoulders, and leave the silver woods leaner.

A hundred years ago Anne Barnard, herself a tree-planter for the generations to come, talks with satisfaction of 'The Marriage of Miss Silver-tree and Donald Fir-tops.' Marinus says I am a sentimental traveller, but it is a distressing end to such a *ménage* after only one hundred years! Barrow, the naturalist, speaks of the moth which feeds on the *Protea argenta*, and suggests turning them to some account, seeing that it is said to be exactly the same insect which spins the strong Indian silk called 'Tussach.' Here is an idea of interest, but that means the protection of the silver-tree. There is in Cape Town a society for the preservation of objects of national interest—a slumbering giant of the moment. The protection of natural objects of national importance and beauty should appear as an amendment on its syllabus. In France, a fat little bourgeois Ministre de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux Arts, or the fatter and more bourgeois Sous-Préfet of a small town, will run about on any hot day or any cold day, with all the importance and authority

of the State embodied in his active patriotic French body and his 'red ribbon,' and behold! 'Messieurs, you would destroy this tree—"tiens!"—destroy the beauty of France, "je vous demande?" Never, "jamais de la vie!"' The tree stays. That ancient wall destroying the value of a good building site —'tant pis!' It remains! 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité'—the New Rule; but we must perforce worship the Old. Such the snobbism of La Patrie, La France.

Such is my plea for the shining, Ancient Inhabitants of the Bosheuvel. Most travellers assert that they are unique, growing in no other part of the world; and many affirm that they are indigenous. Their evolution is distinctly traceable in the soft grey silkiness on the back of the leaves of the large, yellow protea-bush. A careful walk across the Wynberg hills, and you will come back to report that nearly every shrub or even quite tiny ground plant is of the protea family, vastly productive and attractive family, from the yellow giants with their pink-tipped cousins, the sugar-bushes—the treasure caves of the bees and tiny, brilliant, green sugar-birds—to the top-heavy white protea, sometimes painted, like Alice's red rose-tree, a deep crimson. Some very distant cousins, who have not risen sufficiently high in their world, have no flowers at all, only brilliant-coloured red and yellow stem tops.

We have seen the Bosheuvel in many moods and seasons; we have been there when the sweet-smelling pink flower, half acacia, half pea, the Keurboom, lines the paths, and Bishopscourt lies in a deep blue sea of mist, while above, the 'Skeleton' and 'Window' Gorges are mauve with aching buds of the oaks in early spring. Now it is middle summer, with fields of yellow mustard flower, tall blue reeds, and wild-geraniums, of which it is said that 'this tribe of plant alone might imitate in their leaves every genus of the vegetable world.'

Our ponies crackled their way over the dead silver leaves as we climbed over this old outpost hill, from whose summit the agitated freemen or soldiers would see the 'Caapmen' dancing round their fires below. The hill has a fighting reputation; terrible murders of slaves and burghers and cattle-thieving were daily recorded from the vicinity of the Bosheuvel in the first Commander's journal Van Riebeek, walking up from his farm below, saw 'Kyekuyt,' his second outpost, burning away to the tune of this Hottentot singing; saw the Saldanhas pressing close to its base, forming one long ominous barrier along the blue shadow. His mind was full of tricks for peace. By a clever ruse he turned these savages with their herds through the Kloof Nek, hoping they might wander away to Cape Point. But they hurried back over the

Constantia or Wynberg Pass, and their cattle fed with the Company's cattle, and they danced once again on the 'Hen and Chickens,' whose grey granite boulders, several small rocks clustering round a big one, would form fit temples for these worshippers of the moon.

When we reached the famous 'Grey Hen' overlooking the Wynberg Park, Marinus produced a small piece of paper, and read from it this scheme of peace, signed in full by the Council and the Commander, recommending their decision to the grace of God and the approval of Amsterdam: 'That not only should the Colony be protected from the ravages of the Hottentots by the redoubts placed at intervals along the river, with the last and farthest on the Bosheuvel, called "Hout den Bul" (Hold the Bull), but a fence of bitter almonds should be planted across the Bosheuvel, stretching to the bottom and then going off at a direct angle along the river lands to the seashore.'

On our way along the river we have behaved with more inquisitiveness than respect; most unsuspecting people have had their gardens and fields incautiously explored by Marinus and me. Here and there we have found in the overgrown garden of a thatched house, in a tangle of oleanders (or Chinese roses, as the Dutch call them)—and goodness knows they are the only flowers that can possibly account for the floral decorations on old

China — myrtle hedges, Cape jasmine, and magnolias (can't you smell the garden?), a few little clumps of the shining, green bitter almond, the last of the old fence.

It is not, however, hard to find on the Bosheuvel Hill, though it is always being destroyed in the bush fires so frequent on the hill, when in a few minutes hundreds of trees have given one sharp crackle of agony, and are charred heaps of silvery ashes. We traced it, this old warrior of a hedge which was once the only shade for the horsemen and soldiers stationed at the Redoubt. It crosses the middle of the hill. It once looked on one side on the farm of the Commander, and on the other side on the huts and kraals of the Hottentots, whose erring cattle poked their uncivilized horns through its thick greenness; and now its aged branches lap over a barbed-wire fence which runs along the farms Oosterzee and Glen Dirk, of Mr. Philip Cloete and his brother; while, on the other side, the firs and oaks hide the white walls of Bishopscourt. The silver-tree and the bitter-almond hedge are the Ancient Inhabitants, and Marinus and I felt we were friends and in league with the barbed-wire fence, and we hated the position.

So we rode down the hill into the Wynberg Park, and leaving the camp on the left we crossed the glen at the bottom of Glen Dirk, and, behold,

we were in a sea of vineyards, the purple bunches almost resting their ripe weight on the burning pink earth.

Some old naturalist thinks that it is to the laziness of the old vine-growers that we owe the slow evolution of our wine. No tall trellised vines or standards of France and Spain and the Rhine, no rows of mulberry-trees supporting the hanging tendrils as in Italy, but low, stubby-looking little vine-sticks; and, says my authority of a hundred years ago, 'as is well known, the exhalations from the earth are so much imbibed by the leaves of the tobacco plant which grow nearest to it, that those leaves are always rejected as unfit for use, so it is natural to suppose that the fruit of the vine hanging very near to, or even resting upon, the ground, will also receive the prevailing flavour exhaling from the soil.' This was the theory of a theorist. I have the authority of a wine-maker who says that it is not only the heavy spring winds that have necessitated low vines, but that the Cape wine was, and is, essentially a sweet wine, and to procure the right amount of sugar it is important to grow the vines as near the ground as possible, that the radiation of the sun off the ground may ripen them. Later came the demand for a lighter wine, and creeping vines were introduced grown on wire, but as close to the ground as possible, otherwise the wine does not maintain itself, and becomes

acid. The old Pontac vine, which is a creeper by nature, was treated in the old days, and is still treated as a creeper, by tying a long cane across the centre of the tree, so that it lies horizontally across, close to the ground; no wire is used, or the days of sweet Pontac would be over.

My first authority, the theorist, deplores, in excellent English, the slackness that existed in the making of wine and brandy. I remember with horror seeing in Constantia cellars the old process in full swing. Huge vats—the hugeness of a fairy-tale ogre's bath—raised high up in the gloom of the cellar, the sickening smell of fermentation, the squash, squash, bubble, bubble, of the juice oozing through the vat holes, and the sweating blacks, in tunics that reached to the knee and were once white, treading and squashing the grapes, their black faces bobbing up and down in the great vats, sometimes singing, or spitting out the chewed tobacco, the Nirvana of the workers. My whole body and soul revolted against this physical strength and stench—to me it was the greatest weapon in the total abstainer crusade; the nauseous odour of malt and beer is nothing to it.

Oh! it's a fascinating subject, this culture of the Vine, as old as the hills, and with the greatest sympathy do the Jew and the Gentile view it; and its cosmopolicy is almost perfect. It makes brothers of strangers, swine of brothers; it is an everlasting

monument to Adam—he went out of Paradise to till the ground, and wherefore till unless to grow the vine which alone can make him forget Paradise—and in its long pageant come passing by, old Noah and his sons, who peopled the earth; Dionysius and his followers—his troupe of Bacchantes revelling in leopard skins, purple grapes and flowing hair, and in turn their ghastly following of fauns and satyrs, the chorus for their appalling rites and festivals; then comes the solemn Persian, whose women carried the purple wine while he sang the praises of both, in the guise of the philosophy of the most ancient Abyssinian Universities; in great disorder crowd along the poisoners of early Rome and the Renaissance, carrying their fatal goblets; the decadent revellers of Lemnos in artistic drunkenness—roses and pearls and wine and the heated dancers of inspiration, which made luxury to be desired. In the crowd, jostling with all, pass Popes and Cardinals with more wine—strange vicissitude! The Host of the Lord followed by the faithful—it is now become the religion of the world. Then come the painters, the great 'primitives,' and the makers of the new religion, creators of sublime pictures—a 'Last Supper'; the wine in the cup, pure red, as red as the wine Bacchus is flinging over his drunken followers, as red as the wine of Omar, of Cleopatra's love-philtres dissolving pearls. Great Fellowship of the Vine; it rules the world! Continue looking: there is more proces-

sion; picturesque, besatined men who have fought picturesque duels, and gambled and drunk wine in the coffee-houses (what a paradox!), men who have made poems and books, and run States and Empires, and have laid with unflagging regularity under their tables in the respectability which rank and custom made possible; and looming in the gloom behind the pageant are the shadows of the invading army. They, too, have kept their pattern in this kaleidoscope; the men who have made a Hell for the drunkards — the Ironsides, Calvinists, Protestants, a dull crowd to follow such gorgeousness. The Banners of Temperance are Grey and Green: and grey is an enduring colour, and clashes with nothing; and green is the colour of the World! the Earth! and the woods! leaves and pure water! the singing of birds! time to sleep, time to eat, time to listen! This may be behind the grey banners; but the Eyes of the Pageant are near-sighted and tired with overmuch colour and vibration, and the Ears of the Pageant are tuned too high to hear the song of birds.

We have been round the Mulberry Bush, round and round. . . .

> 'This is the way we have brushed our hair;
> This is the way we have washed our faces;
> This is the way we have eaten our food;
> This is the way we go to bed;
> This is the way we get up again.'

All the cynical philosophy of that child-game brings us back to where we started—the vineyards.

I told all this to Marinus as we lazed along the path through the vineyards, with Klastenbosch Woods on our right and tiny thatched farms with a symmetrical patch of cabbages and violets supporting each household: the slopes of the Tokai or Steenbergen ranges before us, 'Un paysage après Claud.'

Constantia was once divided into two big plots —Great and Little—and a few things in between which didn't count much.

Now—well, there are such pretty names; old Klastenbosch, its outhouses dying in their old faith, with dilapidated Dutch white and green and low stoeps, while the dwelling-house flaunts its regenerated walls in newly-acquired glory, full of comfortable English furniture—the fullest example of the new South African nation, in ideals laid down by a clever man—*enfin!* what could be more solid than such combination? English, Dutch, and German. But the Klastenbosch pigs are still black, and they grunt and nozzle in the oak forest and along the stream with the wild olive-trees on its banks *comme autrefois.* To continue the list of names. Just below us in a poplar forest lies 'Belle Ombre'; to our left is 'Alphen'; and we trotted past its gates and low white walls, along the avenue of twisted, red-dusted stone-pines, past 'Hauptville,' a tiny spot in the midst of its acres of vines, and up the pink, pine-edged Constantia road to Groot Constantia.

FIR AVENUE—ALPHEN

CHAPTER VII

THE CONSTANTIA VALLEY

Lady Anne Barnard writes amusingly of a visit she paid to this green valley from her home on the other side of the hill, to the house of Mynheer Cloete, who once had to pay one thousand dollars for a large piece of Druip[1] stone. In a cave beyond Sir Lowry's Pass this gentleman saw the mass of petrifaction, and thinking it a safe thing, he made a bet with a Boer standing near that, though no one could possibly get such a fragile mass over the pass, he would give one thousand dollars to have it at Constantia. The fragile mass, and the Boer, turned up one day at Constantia, to the disgust of Mynheer.

Lady Anne took Lord Mornington, stopping at the Cape on his way to India, to lunch with this Cloete, who showed her a new blend of wine which he had himself invented. 'I was astonished,' she remarks, 'to hear a Dutchman say he did anything his father had not done before him, for when

[1] Druip stone—*i.e.*, stalactite.

I asked him why such and such a thing was not done, he shrugged his shoulders and said 'it was not the custom.' A characteristic episode, I fancy, and one which has taken too long to change, independence of mind and imagination not being smiled upon by cautious contentment.

As Governors-General did not often pass the Cape, Mynheer brought out his best and oldest port, sherry, and claret, and 'the gentlemen's prejudices got the better of their manners'; Mynheer Cloete copiously drinking foreign claret, remarking, 'My wines are valuable; and I am glad when others like them, but I do not; whoever prizes what is made at home?'

A few years before Mynheer did without his after-dinner (luncheon) 'slaap' to entertain Lord Mornington and the Barnards, Monsieur Le Vaillant, turning his unappreciated French back on the town 'where only the English are loved, wandered into the quince and myrtle-hedged vineyard of Cloete's Constantia, where his host, a Jacobin to his finger-tips, gave him a 'sopje'[1] of his best Constantia, and Le Vaillant bewailed his prejudiced Cape Town audience aloud:

'Mynheer, here in your Kaapstad, it is the

[1] A 'sopje' or 'sooppie,' a glass of rack or gin, or, rather, a French brandy. Before sitting down to dinner it was etiquette to offer a 'soppe' or a little white wine, into which wormwood or aloes had been infused in order to excite the appetite.

English who are adored; when they arrive, everyone is eager to offer them a lodging. In less than eight days everything becomes English in the house upon which they have fixed their choice; and the master and the mistress, and even the children (with his fine laces ballet-dancing round his waving and gesticulating hands), *et même des enfants!* soon assume their manners.' Then came the currant in this suet. 'At table, for instance, the knife never fails to discharge the office of the fork! Would you credit this, Mynheer? I have even heard some of the inhabitants say that they would rather be taken by the English than owe their safety to the French.' Mynheer, deep in his 'sopje,' grunts a Dutch grunt of uncompromising depth.

This garrulous French explorer found this rich old Cloete less sympathetic than his Jacobin friend Broers, for whose services at a critical time a grateful French Government was not unwilling to shower rewards, and Le Vaillant left Constantia to write of it: 'That this celebrated vineyard does not produce a tenth part of the wine which is sold under its name. Some say the first plants were brought here from Burgundy, others from Madeira, and some from Persia. However this may be, it is certain (in 1782) that this wine is delicious when drunk at the Cape; that it loses much by being transported; and that after five years it is worth

nothing. Close to Constantia is another vineyard, called the Lesser Constantia (Klein Constantia), but it is only within these later years that it has begun to be held in the same esteem as the former. It has even sometimes happened that the produce of it has been sold for a larger sum than that of the other at the Company's sales! As it is separated from the other only by a plain hedge, it is probable that there was formerly no difference between the wines, but in the manner of preparing them. Only the rich use the wine of other countries.'

A not too flourishing 'koopman' (merchant), a lover of the English and a well-known despiser of the popinjay little Frenchman, hearing this remark in a coffee-house, and not counting on the irrepressible Broers, sat one evening on the stoep of his long, flat-roofed house in the Wale Street. Up from the Heerrengracht, across the canal bridge, came Monsieur le Français with friend Fiscal Broers. This was an opportunity to be seized. 'Dantje!' echoed in loud tones down the Wale Street. Dantje the slave came running up from the kitchens. 'Fetch some red wine immediately.' 'The vanity of this man,' says the triumphant Le Vaillant, 'is ridiculous. Mr. Broers assures me that he has not a single drop in his possession, and that he had perhaps drunk of it ten times in his life.' On this account, having reached the top

of the street, they turned round and beheld the knowing Dantje pouring out beer! Slimmer Kerl! There seems justifiable reason for belief that Dantje scored heaviest in this particular case.

By now we have passed the gates of High Constantia and Klein Constantia, and very soon have reached the Government wine-farm, Groote Constantia, Simon Van der Stel's home, of which so much has been written, and which we passed rather hurriedly; for it does not please me to know that its best furniture has disappeared, that the new wine cellars have iron roofs, that the old bath is overgrown with brambles and weeds, and that convicts in a plague of arrow-marked garments frighten the birds who come to 'steal in the vineyards.' We cut across country into the Tokai road, through a violet farm, whose charm dies when the flowers fade in early summer. There are acres and acres of violets, hedged by poplars, and deep streams which water them and overflow into potato lands lying lower down in 'Retreat' country, and help to feed the 'vleis' at Lakeside. We raced along a mile of sandy lane lined with firs and protea and heath, called, by reason of some virtue, 'The Ladies' Mile.' This road led us to the farm 'Berg Vliet,' behind whose white walls we passed into a sandy vineyard track, and soon we reached the Tokai convict station and the oak woods of the Manor House.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOUNTAIN

To realize the Cape Peninsula one must stand on the lower plateau of Table Mountain, near the Wynberg Reservoir : there is a clear, neat map of the country laid out before one.

We drove up over the Hen and Chickens Hill, the road running parallel with the old bitter-almond Hedge to the teak-gated enclosure on the ' Rhodes Road.'

It was a misty morning, though the sun was hot; the Flats were mostly in shade, with long shafts of light striking across the sand-dunes and the ' vleis.'

A trolley, dragged by a white horse, brought us through a grove of silver-trees to a tin shed, where a coolie half-caste told us that we should have to wait for the mountain trolley, which was then running up coal and food to the workers at the reservoir on the mountain above us.

The thin mist crept up and down the slopes, and hordes of black flower-pickers passed us,

CONSTANTIA VALLEY AND FALSE BAY, WITH CAPE POINT

carrying huge bunches of pink and purple flowers, gathered from the Skeleton and Window Gorges, to be sold next morning in Adderley Street.

A small black trolley, with planks across the top to serve as seats, slipped through a clump of gum-trees, stopped at the shed, and we climbed in. The damp mists crept lower, and Marinus lent me his big black mackintosh. The trolley was hauled up the one-in-one gradient by a rope worked by steam. Running from the front of the car to the iron bar at the back of it was a small piece of dilapidated-looking rope, the object of which I could not imagine. Slowly we climbed through the gum-trees, and came face to face with the grey wall of mountain towering before us.

The rays of sun caught the silver-trees below, and they flashed their farewells as we mounted into the mists. On our right were slopes of pale pink gladioli and gentian-blue flowering reed. On our left, clumps of scarlet-red 'Erica' heath and brown grasses, and far—terribly far—below us the Rhodes Road winding close to the mountain over Constantia Nek.

Suddenly I felt the rope tighten, and instinctively (no need to ask its use now) found myself clinging and crouching forward with a tense feeling in my throat.

The mountain seemed almost to hang over the car, yet the line went straight up.

I smelt the pungent scent of wild-geraniums, and knew there were pink flowers, but my eyes saw not.

The rope slackened, and I looked back!

I understood why Lot's wife became a pillar of salt: we had come up over the edge of the world.

Once, like a reassuring presence, a small black car ran down past the trolley, almost brushing my coat.

Twelve minutes of this, then before us were iron sheds and black and white genii—the men who had made the line and the men who worked the trolley. Inside the shed the puffing little engine of magic power. Then the 'man who makes' on the mountain hurried us off, through a forest of thin firs, on to a plain of rock and white sand, with not more than ten feet of view around.

It was a mysterious walk, this pilgrimage in silence through the rain—soft, soaking stuff of spray—past huge water-worn boulders, grey granite gargoyles that peered at us through the fog. No sound but the noise of our footsteps on the damp white pathway, and the crunch of small pebbles as we passed between grey walls of rock.

Suddenly the way became a field of mauveness, palest pink and purple flowers, hedged by masses of tall, yellow, flowering reeds, while close to the damp earth grew hundreds of sweet-smelling butter-coloured orchids and white crassula.

As we watched our phantom party moving through the flowers in their unpractical garments, Marinus reminded me of how Anne Barnard had climbed this mountain in scanty skirt, her husband's trousers, and pattens. The memory of Anne made me sing something Scotch—not her own song, 'Robin Gray,' but 'Loch Lomond.' I sang very softly to suit the mists, elusive spirits with feathery wings.

As I sang there came a noise of driven waters, the clouds moved away, and before us was a lake: a great ocean it might have been, for one saw no farther shore, but only big angry waves dashing against the rocks.

The 'man who made things' took us down the bank and led us on to a huge wall with a cement pathway and a thin iron rail.

On one side of the water, a sheer drop of over a hundred feet, a drop into ferns and creepers and gorgeous greenness. On the other side, sixty feet across, were the wind-driven waters of the big Cape Town reservoir, and the clever fingers of the 'man who made' pointed into the mist to where there was another of those caged seas, 'The highest dam in Africa—in all Africa,' he said, with some suspicion of satisfaction in his voice.

Big waves splashed over the stone wall, and through the mist we heard a dog bark from the caretaker's cottage across the water.

A Diary from Disa Head, Table Mountain.

Disa Head, Table Mountain,
January 29, 1910.

A small Norwegian Pan is sitting on a big grey rock beside me as I write; he is a Christian, civilized imp by birth, and his name is Olaf Tafelberg Thorsen, and he is a Viking by descent. He is round and brown as one of the little pebbles that lie on the white shores of the big blue dams, and his eyes are like the blue-brown pools that are in the shadow of the 'Disa Gorge.' This world, which I had only seen through the grey mists, is sparkling in the perfect atmosphere of some 2,000 feet above the sea.

The same trolley I have spoken of before ran me and my baggage up the Wynberg side of the mountain. On top I was met by its inventor and the father of Olaf Tafelberg, and we formed a procession, to walk for three-quarters of an hour to this home on the grey rock above the dam, where months before I had heard a dog bark out of the mist.

Olaf Tafelberg has a Viking brother, Sigveg. fair and blue-eyed, who knows every flower on the mountain. Then there is a girl child with nothing more distinctive than the most distinctive name of Disa Narina; but she has the same simpleness of manner as the buxom brown Lady Narina, beloved

by Monsieur Le Vaillant—the 'model for the pencil of Albano'—'the youngest of the Graces, under the figure of a Hottentot.' This fascinating Hottentot, whom Le Vaillant met with on his inland travels, became a kind of dusky and rustic Egeria. But Narina possessed more morality than morals, and made life very pleasant for herself, acquiring many fine bracelets and head-handkerchiefs from her devoted Frenchman, whose 'sentimentality' induced him to weep over the far-travelled letters of Madame Le Vaillant, and to be content to see Narina in the capacity of a game dog who would tramp for miles with him along the banks of the river Groot-Vis.

But this is a diversion from the small Disa Narina of Table Mountain. Narina is the Hottentot word for flower, and the flower is a gorgeous species of lily in every shade of red, pink, and maroon, covered with shining gold dust. There is a picture by an old Dutch master of the time of William of Orange, hanging in a room in Hampton Court—dull pink narinas in a gold vase.

The red grandiflora Disa grows in a deep gully running right through the mountain. The father of Disa Narina took me into the gorge over which the great white dam wall towers, and down which 25 to 50 million gallons of water rush weekly into the thirsty Cape Town reservoirs. We watched it dashing and splashing out of its narrow valve pipe

down this steep ravine with towering, fern-covered cliffs on either side, down into the soft blue distance, where it rushes through a tunnel, and is lost from sight. Poor water! to leave those lovely blue lakes for dusty Cape Town; no wonder it grumbles and foams all the long length of the Disa Gorge. Some of it escapes—for a rest—into the dark brown pools that lie round the low tree-roots in the shadow of the dripping fern cliffs.

I climbed along some fallen boughs into the coolness to pick the fern, which is a bright pink colour where it grows in the shadow. High above I saw the crimson disa and terracotta heath, and, edging the pathway, a pure mauve flower and gentian-blue lobelia, the ancestor of that little blue border for English flower-beds. The first lobelia emigrant left the Cape in 1660, and arrived to find London almost too busy welcoming a new-old King to worry very much about its little Colonial blueness. Still, it has found a certain rural fame, and has returned to the land of its birth; but its mountain brothers, who are citizens of the world, would wonder at its small size.

We climbed down the gorge through an aromatic hedge of shrub and tall red gladiolus and royal blue agapanthus, until we came to a projecting cliff, called 'Lover's Leap,' which has the romantic and tragic tradition that its name implies. Instead of being overpowered by its tragedy and its height,

I sat down on a sun-warmed rock, and so closely in our souls are the praises of all religions allied, that, stirred by the pureness of the air, the blueness of the distances, the sea before me and the distance of the world below, I unconsciously quoted the words which are written by Walt Whitman in that creed of the vagrant philosopher, the 'Song of the Open Road': 'The efflux of the Soul is happiness; here is happiness; I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times.

'Now it flows unto us: we are rightly charged; the earth never tires.

'I swear to you that there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.'

Sunday, January 30, 1910.

I have spent the morning in the fir-woods which fringe the dams. Through a dip in the mountains facing east, I see the blue peaks of the Hottentot's Holland Ranges. A trolley brought me and my books down from the house on the rock, and I walked up the 'Kitchen Gorge' to find an old Hottentot cattle kraal—the grey rocks covered with lichen—and close beside it, on the side of the mountain, a concave rock big enough to hold six herds. Just above us the famous 'Echo' Valley, where Anne Barnard, having discarded many pairs of pattens, called on her party to drink the health of His Majesty King George, 'not doubting that

all the hills around would join us: "God save the King—God save great George our King!" roared I and my troop. "God save—God save—God save —great George—great George—great George our King!" echoed the loyal mountains.'

Anne was almost the first woman to climb up the mountain, and there was pretty heavy betting against it in the town.

Among her party was one of the pleasantest, best-informed, and most eager-minded young men in the world—a Mr. Barrow, a naturalist and explorer, who was employed by the Governor, Lord Macartney, to report on the Colony, and especially its unexplored territory. Barrow wrote a life of Lord Macartney and a two-volume book of travels in Africa, in which it is amusing to trace the way of all explorers—the casting of dark doubts on the writing of those who have been before. Le Vaillant dismissed the disgraceful old gossiper Kolbe in a few well-timed words: 'The Residence of this man at the Cape is not yet forgotten. It is well known that he never quitted the town, yet he speaks with all the assurance of an eyewitness. It cannot, however, be doubted that, after an abode of ten years, having failed to accomplish what he was commissioned to do, he found it much easier to collect all the tipplers of the Colony, who, treating him with derision whilst they were drinking his wine, dictated memoirs to him from

tavern to tavern, tried who could relate to him the most absurd and ridiculous anecdotes, and amused him with information until they had drained his bottles. In this manner are new discoveries made, and thus is the progress of the human mind enlarged!'

In turn Barrow treats Monsieur Le Vaillant in like manner. For while visiting some years later the farm on which Le Vaillant killed some tigers with so much éclat and danger that a few pages are devoted to the feat, Barrow hears a very different story at the famous house of Slabert in the Groen Kloof. The family knew Le Vaillant well, and Mr. Barrow read his travels aloud, to the intense amusement of the Slaberts. Barrow says in his book: '. . . But the whole of his transactions in this part of the country, wherein his own heroism is so fully set forth, they assert to be so many fabrications'; that the celebrated tiger-shoot was done entirely by their own Hottentots' trap-gun; and that the gay Le Vaillant found the animal expiring under a bush, and, with no great danger to himself, discharged his musket into the dying tiger!

Le Vaillant had set out to find a barbarous race said to wear cotton clothing. His first book of travels in the East had sold well, and here in Africa Kolbe's imagination had left little scope for improvement; hence these revilings.

DISA HEAD, TABLE MOUNTAIN,
January 31.

There was no sunrise this morning; a driving mist and a howling, black south-easter. 'Table Mountain has put on its peruke,' says the witty Le Vaillant, so there will be no fir-woods or flower-hunting this morning; and I am sitting in a small office. Through the windows, in the minutes between the mists, I can see the blue Indian Ocean and Hout Bay, and the tallest heads of the Twelve Apostles Mountains, or 'Casteelbergen' as they used to be called. Every hour it grows clearer, and the wind keeps the clouds high up, their great dark shadows flying across the grey rocks like a defeated army of Erlkings. A big bird battling against the gale in the Disa Valley reminds one of the story told by some old traveller, who states that, when the south-east wind blew very strongly, whole swarms of vultures were swept down from the mountain into the streets of Cape Town, where the inhabitants killed them, like locusts, with big sticks!

The world is showing itself now, but all looks cowed and dominated by the fury of the wind. A mad game this—wind and clouds in league, making a sun-proof roof, with only the noise of the gale, the splash of the driven waters in the dams below, and the bells of the goats walking round the house in the fog.

A SUNSET ON THE LION'S HEAD: EFFECT OF SOUTH-EAST WIND

The Fir-Woods at Disa Head.

I have seen the kingdoms of the world, and am satisfied—a wondrous state of mind and body! I have sat on a ledge of crassula-covered rock and looked down upon Cape Town—Lion's Head far below us, the green slopes scarred by innumerable red roads, the bay clear and calm beneath us, and a gentle south-east breeze with the coolness of water behind us. To the north, line upon line of low hills swimming in blue haze, the farms of Malmesbury showing up like little white beacons in the plains; to our left the Platt Klip Gorge, like a great rent in the grey mountain. My guide, who is a philosopher, started a story—at least, I thought it was a fairy-tale—of a sanatorium on the flat top and a railway. 'Cape Town has got that up its sleeve'—I realized that he really was speaking sense. It will happen, of course, in the natural order of things; and it will bring the believers and the unbelievers—those who see and those who 'pick blackberries to stain their faces'—the cool gorges will echo with their voices, the Disa will be hedged round with regulations stronger than barbed wire, and the swampy ground which now grows shiny white pebbles will grow potatoes and lettuce for the multitude.

In the old journal we have the first record of the climbing of Table Mountain:

'*Sunday, September* 29, 1652.

'Fine day. Our assistants and two others ascended Table Mountain with the Ottento, who speaks a little English; saw the fires lit by them; ascent difficult; top of mountain flat—as broad and three times as long as the Dam of Amsterdam, with some pools of fresh water.'

The present pool has very little water; but then, it is summer, and we took the rain gauge for the month and poured back on to the earth three large drops of water!

Barrow, in his description of the ascent, which he made in the charming company of the Barnards, talks of the view from the top: 'All the objects on the plain below are, in fact, dwindled away to the eye of the spectator into littleness and insignificance. The flat-roofed houses of Cape Town, disposed into formal clumps, appear like those paper fabrics which children are accustomed to make with cards. The shrubbery on the sandy isthmus looks like dots, and the farms and their enclosures as so many lines, and the more-finished parts of a plan drawn on paper.'

But we crossed the flat top and came to the Wynberg side: saw the country, neatly mapped as Barrow says, bathed in sunshine. My guide has been a sailor, and has travelled round the world, but here he says: 'Here is the best view in the world!' and he went off to examine more rain gauges.

It is a wonderful thing to be utterly alone with the earth and the sun ; to become a hill Pantheist, but to realize why, in a hot stone church, one can get up and sing that the Sun, the Moon, the Air, the Mountains, and the Earth may bless and praise the Lord.

CHAPTER IX

ROUND THE LION'S HEAD AND THE VICTORIA ROAD

Sea Point lies, white-roofed and aloe-hedged, under the sanctified Lion's Head Mountain; sanctified, because of a great white cross scarred into the bare rock by a nation to whom crosses and scars were almost inseparable. Da Gama's gigantic cross on the Lion's Head is one of the many to be found round the coast; but here begins and ends every trace of Portuguese possession or atmosphere in the Cape Peninsula.

Old Sea Point savours of ancient Dutch régime, but is hedged in on every side, hidden, almost lost, by Cape Town Commerce *chez eux*. But along the Beach Road, running from the old Downs, or Common, to the Queen's Hotel, are houses with names which are historical: flat-roofed, whitewashed houses, with high stoeps and stucco fountains, syringa-trees, cactus plants, and hedges of flaming red aloes behind their white garden walls; old-fashioned

ON THE VICTORIA ROAD, NEAR OUDE KRAAL

gardens with box and myrtle hedges, lichens and gaudy mesembryanthemums crawling like giant starfish over the walls. Edging the road and hiding the beach from travellers are thick hedges of kei-apple, a prickly red berry, and of a low shrub whose leaves furnished correct food for the imported French snails, whose descendants are purely a pest and have no justification. But the French-lavender hedges and pink Huguenot roses can still say 'Bonjour' to the snails. It is the only French word any of them remember; it is prettier than the 'Dag,' which the prickly-pear, gorgeous with orange and carmine flower, grunts across the road to the hedge of wax berries; it is prettier, too, than the 'Morgen,' which is the large white 'Frau Karl Druschki's' morning greeting; just a little daintier than 'Saka bona,' from the purple jacaranda and scarlet kaffir-boom; but far, far more charming than the chorus of 'Hullo! hullo!' from the cheerful English trees and plants in this white-walled garden. And then there is the sea—not the wind-swept sea of False Bay, but a cosmopolitan sea; a highroad, where ships of many flags sail past the rocks, bound for the world.

In one white-roofed house lived a man on whose importance hung the beginning of a nation. The resolution in favour of responsible government had been passed by the Lower House of Parliament. The decision now rested with the Council. To be a

member, the qualification meant possessing property to the value of some thousand pounds over and above mortgages. The member whose vote turned the balance was in such bad circumstances, that even if the mortgaged white house at Sea Point was sold he would not be qualified for this momentous voting. His friends, filled with national and patriotic zeal, rushed out to Sea Point: 'Have you, then, nothing of any value?' they cried. 'Yes; I will show you something which might be of some value. I was once in Turkey and of service to the Sultan.' He produced from a deep-shelved Dutch cupboard with brass fittings, then of little account, a small gold case, filigree-worked, and inside a snuff-box sparkling with diamonds, rubies and emeralds. 'Given by the Sultan,' said he of the important vote. Nothing more, just this *soupçon* of adventure. Responsible government was carried on a snuff-box.

Sea Point possesses the two best private libraries in the Peninsula. One of them belonged to a great little man, Saul Solomon, of Clarensville, who died some years ago. Public men never live long enough at the Cape to die in the fulness of attainment; ambition and principle go but slowly hand in hand if you would have them travel along the same road, but Saul Solomon's name is high in the annals of politics and principles. The rocks below Clarensville, or probably those larger granite masses beyond

CAMPS BAY, ON THE VICTORIA ROAD

the Queen's Hotel, were celebrated fishing-places in the days of the early Commanders; but one short entry thrills one and dissipates the ideal dulness of the gentle art. During the Van Riebeek reign a corporal went fishing for 'klip' fish amongst the brown seaweed which lies like a barren reef round the south-west coast, when a lion wandered down to the beach, and left so little of the angler that nought of him was found but his trousers and his shoes: which we imagine he had discarded, and was not discrimination on the part of the lion.

Marinus and I climbed into a green tram which ran along a high mountain road overlooking the lower Victoria Road. We reached Clifton, a little kraal of houses and bungalows, and left the tram and walked down to the lower road through an old farm-garden. The steep slopes of the cliff down to the sea were covered with brilliant green shrub and purple flowers. Strolling along, we came upon Camps Bay, which we fancy was Caapmans Bay; for here the Caapmans, or Hottentots, pastured their flocks during their 'merry-go-round' journeying from the Fort, over the Kloof Nek, along the Casteelbergen, or Twelve Apostles Range, to Hout Bay; then often over the Constantia Nek to worry the outposts on the Bosheuvel, and back to the Fort; or from Hout Bay to Chapmans Bay and Noord Hoek, and on to Cape Point. Their last stronghold was in the Hottentot's Hol-

land Mountains; but in the year 1714 nearly all the tribe were exterminated by the smallpox. Four chiefs remained—'Scipio Africanus,' 'Hannibal,' 'Hercules,' and 'Konja'—who received, says the old chronicle, 'the usual stick with the brass knob,' the insignia of office. Camps Bay gave the old map-makers and Commanders some trouble; but they all found the great line of breakers prevented the bay from being used either for themselves or for the landing of hostile forces.

On the slope of the Lion's Head, above the bay, is a little round white house, the Round House, where Sir Charles Somerset spent his week-ends. Sir Charles, whose reign here was during the end of the eighteenth century, used several of the old homesteads as shooting-boxes.

Marinus, with enormous satisfaction, found a stray taxi, and soon we had passed the 'Oude Kraal' of the watermen on our way to Hout Bay. The turreted tops of the Casteelbergen, or Twelve Apostles Mountains, were 'canopied in blue,' their slopes covered with a bright mauve Michaelmas daisy. The narrow road curves and curls round their sides, and below stretch acres and acres of sea, horizonless, heaving and sinking, blue and green and gold, lapping against the edges of the land in crescent-shaped little bays, or dashing against walls of rock. The cliffs, grass-grown down to the water, are covered with flowers, big clumps

of prickly-pear, and blue aloe, every freshly-turned corner more lovely than the last. There is one other road in the world to compare with it, and that road runs along the South of France into Italy; but the waters of the Mediterranean are *fade*, lifeless waters to the ocean that fringes the Casteelbergen in Africa.

Far out into the sea stretches a reef of sharp rocks where many ships have found a terrible end: the steep, slippery slopes beyond the little Lion's Head isolate the coast from all assistance.

In front of us a dull green car was swinging round the curves. 'We'll pass her,' said Marinus, who was driving. The road is not wide—just room enough for two cars to pass abreast. The green car saw us coming, and decided we should not pass her. Marinus jerked his head forward, and vowed we should. For ten minutes I sat rigid; my eyes never left a small spot of mud on Marinus' coat. Between us and the mountain was the green motor; to our right was the sea. We dashed round corner after corner, a great juggernaut of machinery with not a spare yard of road. It was a glorious gamble, with almost a thousand to one that round the next corner we should meet something—a car or a cart. The cars ran silently. . . . Suddenly someone's nerve failed; we had passed the green car, and Marinus turned round to me and grinned. 'All right?' he said. My jaw seemed

set in plaster of Paris, so I grinned too. The chauffeur was cursing softly and rapidly. Over the brow of the Hout Bay Nek was a big white car, full of people and wild flowers, coming towards us. I bent forward close to Marinus, so that the chauffeur should not hear. 'You brute!' I whispered; 'but it was simply great.' And Marinus winked.

We rushed down the hill, lined with pink protea, into the village of Hout Bay, or the Wood Bay, where the Company's yachts and sloops would come to carry away wood from the thick forests. No sign of forest now—only some low, wind-stunted trees along the beach. The Dutch fortified the bay, and the ruins of their fort still stand.

Chapman's Peak hides the curve of the coast and the Noord Hoek and Kommetje Valleys. Near the village is the old home of the Van Oudtshoorn family, whitewash and teak, high-stoeped, with stucco designs, and the date over the door. The Hout Bay Valley has a distinctive charm of its own; its river-bed is overgrown with palmiet, and its thatched farmhouses have Huguenot names: for in this valley grants of land were made to the Huguenot refugees, the road is hedged with little pink Huguenot roses growing over the ground which pastured the Hottentots' cattle. The farm, Orange Grove, lies low in an oak wood.

W. Westhoven · 09

CHAPMAN'S PEAK AND SLANG KOP POINT
FROM HOUT BAY

We climbed the long Constantia Nek, and once more saw the widespread Isthmus, Constantia, Wynberg, and False Bay; little farms, little woods, the smoke from an engine—we had been round our world in a few hours.

CHAPTER X

FALSE BAY

THE old road from Wynberg to Muizenberg is no longer traceable. I imagine it started from Waterloo Green, as all old Wynberg was centred round the hill. A convent stands back from the green, but, like the poem in the story of 'Through the Looking-Glass,' if you look again you will see it isn't a convent at all, but the old Wynberg homestead, one of the early grants of land to a freeman, the home of Mynheer Cloete.

Wynberg hides its archives in overgrown gardens of oleander, wild-olive, blue plumbago hedges, cool white gardenias and red hibiscus flowers, cypress-trees and date-palms, brought from the East by retired soldiers from India, with large livers and small pensions, making their curries and their chutneys in the little thatched bungalows of old Wynberg. To one of these, still standing and acting as a stable to a big white house in the oak avenue which we fancy is part of the old road, came Wellington on his way to India, and gave his name to the avenue. On our way along the main

road to Muizenberg we passed a renovated homestead, probably one of the old rest-houses, now used as a convalescent home, but its gardens are full of old-world memories, willows, and myrtle-hedge, and arbours of strange trees, bent and twisted into fantastic coolnesses.

There is a dull stretch of wattled road running through Plumstead, Diep River, and Retreat. At Diep River the flooded lands grow potatoes, at Plumstead they grow vegetables, all in amongst the wildness of the big plain covered with vleis and protea-bush and purple and crimson heath. The Retreat is historical. It lies on the Cape Town side of the Muizenberg Mountains, which seem to spring up in granite and green from the sea. A narrow strip of land at their base spoils the illusion—'The Thermopylæ of the Cape,' says an old enthusiast some hundred years ago. Through the narrow pass between the sea and mountains retreated the famous Burgher Cavalry, abandoning their position at Muizenberg before the guns of the *America*. But history, I fancy, regards the Battle of Muizenberg more as a diplomatic coup than as a serious fight. Even the cannon-balls, which are dotted along the road from Kalk Bay to Muizenberg, are ending their uneventful days in seaside peace, and their resting-places in soft sand speak of further diplomacy.

Near Lakeside are several old farms with lost

identity. Over the hill, leaving the lovely vleis behind us, we came upon Muizenberg, from an architectural point of view the saddest sight in the world; here are two old landmarks, the one so renovated that it is almost unrecognizable, the other a ruin. The first was a low, whitewashed, thatched homestead—an old inn, or rest-house, as the Dutch called it—and it was named 'Farmer Pecks.' The oldest inhabitant cannot tell why, but I remember the original building with its celebrated signboard. The story of the signboard is as follows: 'Two middies, many, many years ago, returning to Simonstown from Cape Town, where they had been on a jaunt, arrived one dark night at Muizenberg. It was a twenty-mile walk—twenty miles along a difficult track, across a dangerous beach of quicksands (Fish Hoek), and they were travelling on foot, because very few people could afford a cart. It was too late and too dark to continue their journey, so they had to put up at Farmer Pecks'. When it came to paying for the night's board and lodging there was no money—all left in Cape Town. "We'll paint you a signboard," they said — a Utopian mode of finance to solve the difficulty and pay their debt. They must have come from Salisbury Plain, or Farmer Peck had, for the signboard portrayed a mild-looking shepherd of a Noah's Ark type, gazing over a hill at some fat wooden sheep,

AT LAKESIDE, LOOKING TOWARDS CONSTANTIA

AT LAKESIDE, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

grazing in emerald grass, and in the background a very English-looking little farmhouse with rows of stiff Noah's Ark trees. Quite a premature attempt at modern conventional design, inspired by the ideals of "Two Years Old" playing at Creation and landscape-gardening in the nursery. Here the momentous questions are: whether Mr. and Mrs. Noah, in red and blue æsthetic garments of a wondrous purity of line, shall stand under perfectly symmetrical trees which are on dear little rounds of wood, or whether they shall be dotted over the farm together with Shem, Ham, and Japheth, in pure yellow, pink, and green, in close proximity to two pink cows, two red geese, two black pigs, and two purple horses.'

A domesticated sequel to the story of the Flood.

Everyone has played 'Noah,' so everyone will understand the design of the poster.

The following verses were painted under the board, springing from the same talented and amusing brains, a quaint mixture of English, Dutch, and Latin:

'Multum in parvo, pro bono publico,
Entertainment for man and beast all of a row.
Lekker kost as much as you please,
Excellent beds without any fleas.

'Nos patriam fugimus now we are here,
Vivamus, let us live by selling beer.
On donne à boire et à manger ici,
Come in and try, whosoever you be.'

In a balloon issuing from the mouth of the gentle shepherd was this motto, carrying a deeper philosophy: 'Life's but a journey; let us live well on the road, says the gentle shepherd of Salisbury Plain.'

On the opposite side of the road are the ruins of the barracks, a low, stone, thatched house in a green field, surrounded by a stone wall.

Anne Barnard drove down at the peril of her life, she thought, to Simonstown, or False Bay as it was called, and, passing Muizenberg on her way, found the garrison living in huts, and was regaled on boiled beef and Constantia wine served by the late steward of the Duke of Orleans. 'Un mauvais sujet,' says Lady Anne.

The main road runs at the foot of the mountains, with a railway-line and a few yards of beach and rock between it and the sea. The most wonderful sea in the world! emerald green, with mauve reefs of rock showing through its clearness; sapphire blue towards Simonstown, the colour of forget-me-nots sweeping the white crescent of Muizenberg sands.

We passed St. James and Kalk Bay, where the steam-trawler was coming in like a big brown hen to roost surrounded by all the fishing-boats, some still on the horizon, like straggling chickens, flying along with their white wings sparkling and fluttering in the sun and south-east breeze.

W. Weethofer
1910

ON FISHHOEK BEACH, NORDHOEK MOUNTAINS IN DISTANCE

At Fish Hoek, the dangerous beach of quicksands, the setting sun poured through the Kommetje and Noord Hoek Valley, tinting the sandhills until they glowed like gigantic opals; the lights swept pink over the blue streams running across the beach into the sea, and the long line of wave, which rolled in to meet them, made a bank of transparent aquamarine before it curled itself on to the shore—thin blueness with foam-scalloped edges.

We rounded another mountain corner and came upon Glen Cairn with its beach-streams and quarries. Clusters of stone huts, like prehistoric dwellings on the mountain slopes, are the homes of the quarrymen. Simonstown had begun to consider its nightcap when we rode slowly round the last corner. The dark grey cruisers were hardly discernible in the dusk; across the bay, on the Hottentot's Holland, a fire crawled like a red snake up the mountains; the light on the Roman Rock Lighthouse was lit. The gardens of Admiralty House are terraced above the sea by a long, low white wall; to the right is an enormous white plaster figure of Penelope, the old figure-head from the ship of that name, and the unseeing eyes of the watchful Penelope are turned towards the decrepit hulk lying a few hundred yards away. Great magenta masses of bougainvillæa hid the low house, and soon the darkness hid all.

The strains of 'God save the King' from the flagship woke me to the day, and an hour later we were riding along the gum-tree avenue into the town. The quaint little town was named after Governor Simon Van der Stel; before that it was called False Bay, or the Bay of Falso. Here for five months, beginning with March, the ships from Table Bay would anchor, while for five months Table Bay was given over to intolerable gales.

A traveller of the eighteenth century describes the town:

'Close to the shore of the Bay there are a number of warehouses, in which the provisions are deposited for the use of the East India Company's ships. A very beautiful hospital has been erected here for the crews, and a commodious house for the Governor, who usually comes hither and spends a few days while the ships are lying in the Bay. Commerce draws hither also a great number of individuals from the Cape, who furnish the officers with lodgings. While the latter are here the Bay is exceedingly lively, but as soon as the season permits them to heave up their anchors, it becomes a desert; everyone decamps, and the only inhabitants are a company of the garrison, who are relieved every two months. The vessels which arrive then and have need of provisions are in a dismal situation, for it often happens that the warehouse has been so much drained that it is necessary to bring from Cape Town in carts what-

SIMONSTOWN MOUNTAINS, WITH CAPE POINT AND ROMAN ROCK LIGHTHOUSES

ever these new-comers are in want of, and the carriage usually costs an exorbitant price. The hire of a paltry cart is from twenty to thirty dollars a day; I have known of fifty paid for one, and it is to be observed that they can only make one journey in the twenty-four hours.'

We can nowadays, for the exorbitant price of something more than a dollar, run up to Cape Town in less than an hour; but I have heard from not too ancient inhabitants wonderful stories of not too long ago of how, packed like sardines, parties would drive from Town to Simonstown to dance on a gunboat and home again in the dawn, with some danger of the wrong tide over the Fish Hoek beach, or of the bad road to Wynberg.

In an old book of travels I find the *raison d'être* for the name given to the 'Roman' Rock:

'The finest fish are caught here, and particularly the Rooman (or Rooiman), that gives its name to the Roman Rock, in the neighbourhood of which it is found in great abundance.'

The Commander of old Simonstown died a millionaire, and his illegal dealings seem to have been well known and discussed, as all the writers of this time and later speak of it. He had the rank of 'under merchant,' and carried on a trade with the foreign vessels, reselling necessaries at enormous profit. . . . 'Mr. Trail (a great rogue),' writes Anne Barnard to Melville.

We rode up the Red Hill—a steep roadway up the mountain—and saw a precarious-looking aerial car swaying up the mountain-side to the Sanatorium and Range. We ultimately passed quite close to the Range on the flat top in thick purple heath. We looked north, over the False Bay and Noord Hoek Mountains, the Steenbergen, or Tokai Ranges, and saw Table Mountain in a coronet of cloud. Across these flat-topped ranges, over three hundred years ago, had fled the Hottentots, before finding their asylum on the opposite shore—the Hottentot's Holland Mountains. The two Passes—the Kloof and the road from the Castle to the Flats—were carefully guarded. The Caapmans, Hottentots, and Watermen, cattle-thieves, tobacco-thieves, garden-thieves, wreck-salvagers, hurried along with their cattle from Hout Bay, Chapmans Bay, and Noord Hoek, to Cape Point. The Commander sent several parties to hunt them out, and the majority made off over the Flats, led by their rascally chief 'Herry.' The lowest of them, the Watermen, remained behind, hiding in caves and underwood. One fine day Corporal Elias Giero, who, with a considerable force, had wandered for days round Hout Bay and the Berghvalleyen, reported that eighteen hours' walk from this neighbourhood, almost at the southern end of the Cape, he had come upon their camp. It sounds pathetic, this great ex-

pedition for such a small enemy. They found three reed huts, with thirteen men and as many women and children. They were making assegais, when their dogs barked, and they fled into the rushes, crying out that they were Watermen, and not cattle-stealers. But some were recognized by 'men who had felt their assegais,' and the chief was captured. The former were killed. The chief and a *ci-devant* kitchen-boy refused to walk to the fort, 'and, as it was too difficult to carry them, our men brought with them to the fort *their upper lips*.' Many of them were recognized as wood and water carriers to the garrison at the fort, and their names and aliases are carefully recorded—for example: 'Carbinza,' or 'Plat neus'; 'Egutha,' or 'Hoogh en Laagh'; 'Mosscha,' or 'Kleine Lubbert': 'Kaikana Makonkoa'; 'Louchoeve'; 'Orenbare'; 'Diknavel'; and so on. Translated into English—those that are translatable—they run: 'Flat-nose,' 'High and Low,' 'Quick,' 'Bring,' 'Unweary,' 'Hold him fast,' 'He nearly,' etc.

This is a small bit of history which belongs to Cape Point.

CHAPTER XI

THE BLUE SHADOW ACROSS THE FLATS

Our ponies met us at Muizenberg, and we crossed the railway-line on to the long white beach.

It was Easter Monday, and trainloads of inhabitants swarmed like gaudy bees round the bathing-huts. At no other time can one see to better advantage the wonderful fusion of races which has gone to the making of the population of the Cape Peninsula.

In the shade of one of the small, stationary wooden bathing-houses I saw the gardener's family, their colour scheme running through the gamut of shades from white to chocolate. The gardener had once had a Cockney wife, and his life was '*'ell*,' so he married Marlie, the slightly coloured girl brought up on a German mission-station, who made excellent stews, washed his shirts well, and sang Lutheran hymns to the children when they howled. There were ancestors, black and white, on both sides—and everyone hasn't ancestors.

We passed a wagon-load of Malays in gala dress of silks and spangles—our washerwomen—

TABLE MOUNTAIN FROM RETREAT FLATS

W. Westhuis. 04.

possessing the wondrous Oriental gift of elusive speech, which will turn away good Christian wrath. One old Malay told us he remembered the days when all the Malays made their pilgrimage yearly to the grave of Sheik Joseph. A political prisoner of the East India Company, of great wealth and position in the East, he was exiled to the Cape, and lived at the mouth of the Eerste River, near the farm of the Governor's witty brother, Franz Van der Stel. There is a sepulchre which is called the 'Kramat,' or resting-place of a holy man. The wanderers of the Flats in those early days would often come upon the Sheik and his forty followers galloping across the sand-hills. This generation of followers wore suits of neat blue serge, and, over the fez, a wide reed hat with a low, pointed crown.

Marinus and I thought it would require a Shakespeare to describe the heterogeneous mass we passed through. Pathetic sometimes—a knock-kneed clerk from Cape Town, shivering in a new, dark-blue bathing suit, vainly trying to acclimatize his pasty-faced offspring to the waves. Complexions are hard to keep in South Africa; the sun is our master, all-absorbing and requiring all—colour, brain, energy—your puny effort of concentration useless against this fierce, concentrated mass, this alluring South African sun—Lorelei of the South.

The very people here are an example—not one concentrated type. Marinus and I soliloquized quietly until we reached the shallow river which feeds the Lakeside Vleis (lakes). We avoided the beach and kept close up to the sand-dunes, the white sand protected from the tearing gales of the 'south-easters' by a network of creeping 'Hottentot fig,' a fleshy plant with wonderful bright flowers of every hue, and bearing an acquired taste in fruit —a small, dried-up-looking fig.

Tall flowering reeds grow in 'klompjes,'[1] and dotted about are small green bushes covered with red berries—'dinna bessies,' the coloured folk call them. 'Not much cover for the hippo,' laughed Marinus.

My mind went back with a jerk to the old days of Muizenberg, the Mountain of Mice, its cannon buried in the sand, its battle, its fort and barracks, the Caapmans, who wandered with their herds over the flats and killed sea-cows, or hippo, on the very spot where the enterprising boatman of Lakeside had built his café.

'And elephants roamed,' I quoted; 'and always the reflection of Table Mountain—always the same blue lotus lilies, and the sand-hills, and the blue river flowing across the beach.'

We made for Strandfontein, regaining the beach as the tide was going out and we could avoid the

[1] *I.e.*, clumps.

The very people here are an example—are not concentrated type. Marinda and I soliloquised quietly until we reached the station river which feeds the Lakeside Vlei (lake). We avoided the beach and kept close up to the sand-dunes, the white sand protected from the beating gales of the 'south-easter' by a network of creeping 'Hottentot fig,' a fleshy plant with wonderful bright flowers of every hue, and bearing an acquired taste in fruit—a small, dried-up-looking fig.

Tall flowering reeds grew in 'kloofjes,' and dotted about are small green bushes covered with red berries—'dinner-berries' the coloured folk call them. 'Not much cover for the hippo,' laughed Marinda.

My mind went back with a jerk to the old days of Muizenberg, the Mountain of Mice, its cannon buried in the sand, its bottle, its fort and barracks, the Company, who marched with their lands over the flats and killed ten cows, or hippo, on the very spot where the enterprising boatman of Lakeside had built his café.

'And elephants roamed!' I quoted; 'and always the white line of Table Mountain—always the same blue vista, and the sand-hills, and the blue river flowing across the beach.

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SAND DUNES

[1] I.e., sheep.

W. Westhoven
1910

quicksands. Strandfontein, a little desolate bay boasting one reed-covered house and a celebrated beach—celebrated for its shells, huge blue mussels, pale pink mussels, daintily carved nautili, and rows and rows of coral and mauve fan shells.

Again we talked of the old 'Company days,' and the wonderful plan of Commander Van Riebeek to drain the Liesbeek and the Salt Rivers into one big canal which would cut off the peninsula from the mainland, and, like the great Wall of Hadrian, would keep the barbarians out, away from the Company's freemen growing flax, wheat, and disaffection on the swampy flats.

Van Riebeek bewails the impracticability in his journal, which, bound in ancient brown leather, and written in heavy Dutch lettering, is carefully preserved in Cape Town.

'*February* 4, 1656.

'Dry, calm weather. Riebeeck proceeds to False Bay (roads being favourable), accompanied by a guard of soldiers, to see whether the Canal, proposed by Van Goens, could be made across the Isthmus. Took the river course to see whether it at all approached False Bay. Found that the Sweet River, now Liesbeek, which with the Salt River runs into Table Bay, runs snake-like three or four leagues crosswise over the Isthmus, and at some places appears to be stagnant, forming small lakes, between which low and sandy lands lie, until within a league of certain high sand-hills of False Bay,

where it again turns into small streams, which gradually become broader, and form a river of fresh water running further on into a large lake, almost as broad as the Meuse and about two hours on foot in circumference, with deep and brackish water full of sea-cows and sea-horses, and supplied from the downs of False Cape. There was apparently no opening, but the water percolated through the sands. The Lake is still about one and a half hours on foot from the seashore, which is about half an hour's walk broad. The Downs about a league, and so high, that they are almost mountains, twenty or twenty-four behind each other, it would therefore be impossible to cut them through. Besides, there would be lakelets on the Flats, some a quarter, some half a league broad to be cut through. This would also be difficult, because of the rocky ground, as we found the next day, after having spent the night in the veldt. The matter is therefore impossible, and would be useless and most injurious to the Company, as the Canal could not be made so wide and deep as to prevent the natives swimming across with their cattle. In case it is supposed that on this side the passage would be closed to them, it must be borne in mind that a large sheet of water on the south side of False Cape about three hours' walk in circumference, becomes a large dry and salt flat in summer, so that no proper Canal could be pierced through it—as the sand is soft and the downs are high—which latter would continually fill up the channel; thousands of men would be required to keep it

ON THE SANDHILLS NEAR MUIZENBERG

open; so that the Company cannot for a moment think of it, as the expense would be enormous in comparison with the advantages derived. *Millions of gold would be required!* and if finally the work be finished and communication with the natives cut off, it would be absurd to suppose that they could be confined on this side—for the artificial island would have such dimensions that, in order to control it, a large number of men would be required, scattered in the veldt, not a few, but a good many, soldiers.

'The idea that such a canal would enable the householders to live more securely is hardly worth considering, as those who may choose to live here and there may build stone dwellings sufficiently strong to protect them from the natives. Should such free householders cost the Company so much that soldiers are to be kept for their defence, instead of their assisting the Company? . . .'

We cantered over some small sand-hills, and came down to the plains, covered with 'quick' grass, dotted with small yellow protea-bush, tiny pink flowers, and scarlet heath called 'erica,' intersected by blue pools of water, their surfaces almost covered by a sweet-smelling, white water-weed. The Malays gather the flower, 'water-eintje,' and curry it or stew it into a thick soup. A narrow, white, sandy pathway ran between the pools, and far away, in a blue haze, we saw Table Mountain and the Devil's Peak.

Quoting again from the Diary:

'*June* 29, 1656.

'Proceeded to the Flats where Van Goens wished to have canal dug. Find the whole country so inundated with rapid streams that the whole cutting, with redoubts and all, would, if made, be swept away at once. The Flats had become a combination of lakes; the work would therefore at present be left in abeyance.'

The ponies slopped through the wet sand, and ahead lay the big lake called Zeekoe Vlei (*i.e.*, Sea-Cow Lake), separated from a smaller lake, Ronde Vlei, by a narrow isthmus.

Skirting a huge, precipitous mountain of sand, we rode round the vlei, disturbing great flocks of heron, gulls, and wild-duck.

Straight up out of a yellow protea-bush flew a brown bird with a dull orange-red breast—a wip-poor-will, or, as the coloured people say, the 'Christmas bird,' or 'Piet, mij vrouw.' Its call is more surely 'Piet, mij vrouw' than anything else.

'Do you know Le Vaillant's story?' said Marinus. I did. But Marinus loves to tell a story, and he has to listen to many; so I said: 'His story of what?' Then Marinus, being a dear, told me the tale:

'Le Vaillant and the faithful Hottentot chief, or Piet, as his master called him, were out shooting. Le Vaillant shot and killed a female bird. Piet

brought up the bird. "Go back, you adorable Hottentot," said the traveller, "to the spot where you found this bird, for surely there you will find Monsieur le Mari." The "adorable Piet" began to weep; that Baas would excuse him, but this he could not do—never could he fire at the male bird. "Go—I insist!" said Le Vaillant. "No, no, Baas!" And the astonished Baas listened to the reason: that no sooner had Piet shot the female, when the male, to quote the old story, "began to pursue him with great fury, continually repeating, "Piet, mij vrouw! Piet, mij vrouw!" This, in English, is, "Piet, my wife! Piet, my wife!" Small wonder that Le Vaillant wrote of the misjudged, Dutch-ridden Hottentot as being "full of sensibility"!'

The sun had begun to set when we reached the other side of the vlei, and a coloured woman, carrying a mass of blue lotus lilies up to Town for sale, told us 'we had v-e-ry far way still to go.'

Marinus agreed that it was quite worth a hurried ride home, seeing this wonderful kaleidoscope of colouring reflected in the vleis.

The sand-hills around were pink, and over the tops of some appeared the purple of the Muizenberg Mountains. In the north were the Stellenbosch Mountains, with the Helderberg, in a blaze of red, underlined by long patches of shining white sand-hills.

But all the while the great blue shadow of Table

Mountain crept over the Flats, over the vleis, until we watched it reach the north barriers. Slowly the blue mounted, absorbing the flush of sunset, reached the summits, and drove the pink into the fleecy, detached clouds above; these, like blazing balloons, floated over the bay.

I sat up—to reality.

'I have been lost on these Flats, Marinus, and still remember with horror the growing darkness and the interminable miles of sandy road and dense wattle plantations. Let us get on.'

So we rode and rode, through the brown rushes, splashing through water, over mealie patches, dozens of little German children from the tiny farms hidden in low wattle rushing out to see us pass.

On we flew into the darkening blue shadow; behind us, whirlwinds of sand rising like white wraiths of pursuing Erlkings; and before, the smoke from the Kaffir location near the mouth of the Salt River curling into the mist.

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AT THE HEAD OF FALSE BAY

W. Westhofen
1910.